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COLLECTED POEMS

BY

KATHARINE TYNAN

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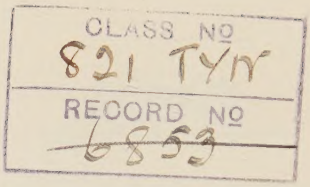
1930



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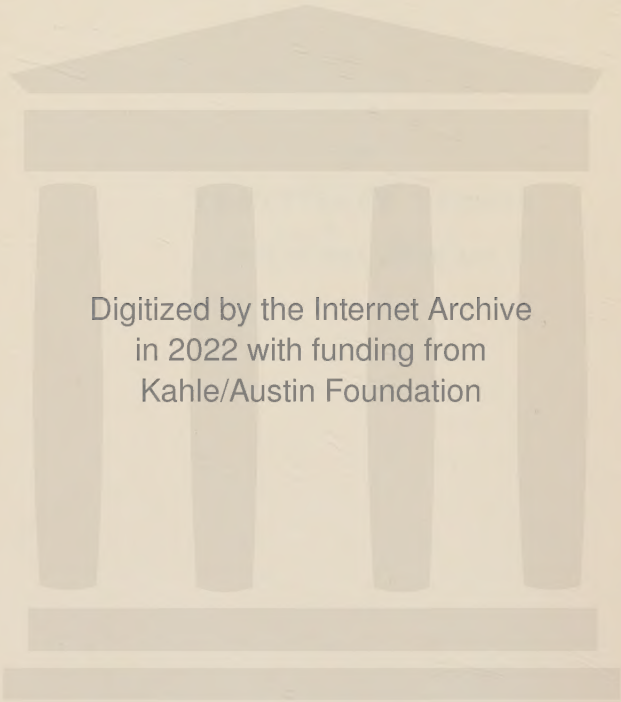
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FOREWORD

KATHARINE TYNAN was the earliest singer in that awakening of our imagination which has been spoken of as the Irish Renaissance. I think she had as much natural sunlight in her as the movement ever attained. The Irish imagination is little interested in normal humanity and its affections. It deserts centres for circumferences. It goes adventuring in Overworld, in fairy, in fantasy, in Underworld, in the crypts and sewers of the soul. All these Irishmen of letters, Yeats, Synge, O'Grady, Stephens, Dunsany, Joyce, O'Casey, O'Flaherty, and most of their contemporaries have this tendency to turn from the hearth and to roam in uncharted regions of the psyche. Katharine Tynan has her own spirituality, but she has kept closer to the normal than any except Padraic Colum. She had something which is rather rarer among poets than most people imagine, a natural gift for song. There is a great distance between my body and my soul, and it was with

so much difficulty or anguish soul could melt body, and body be made transparent so that poetry might come through, that when young I was in despair, believing I was not naturally fitted to use this precious art. I found it so difficult to make a shapely verse that I wondered at Katharine Tynan, to whom the craft seemed to come so easily, who had such a gift for melody. The first perfect saying of verse I ever heard was when she read me the just-written *Children of Lir*, and I listened to a voice which gave its perfect resonance and rhythm and emotional quality to every line. I may be mistaken: but I think it has been easier for her to work in the craft of poetry than it has been with any of the poets I have known. But because it was easy and she has written many books of verse, it would do her wrong to think that what was written with a natural ease was not memorable. There was a mould in the psyche into which thought and emotion were poured, and the lyric record was almost always shapely. No one can be always on peaks of intensity. We, all of us, vacillate between our surfaces and our depths, from verse which makes itself lustrous and decorative with external colour or symbol to verse which embodies profundity of feeling. What is common to Katharine Tynan's lyrics out of whatever mood she writes is a shapeliness in their architecture. This can be seen to perfection

in *Sheep and Lambs*, in *Larks*, and in *Lux in Tenebris*. I think of this shapeliness of a song with the same pleasure I have when I look on a picture where everything in it, colour, form, tone, are harmonised and fit delicately into its four walls. That artistic shapeliness is in danger of becoming a lost art to a generation which grew tired of the traditional courtly dress of poetry and listened to so much free verse that it almost forgot what melody was. It may appear old-fashioned, this adherence to metrical tradition, but I confess I like those who bring their gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and put fine raiment on the children of their spirit. Katharine Tynan says of herself that she was " born under a kind star ". It is true. She is happy in religion, friendship, children, instantly kindling at any beauty in gardens, flowers, in sky and clouds. She has, too, that spiritual bravery which makes beauty out of death or sorrow. A friend passes and he is sped on his journey not with despair but with hope, almost with imaginative gaiety.

> Traveller from the realms of gold,
> Sydney's brother, Raleigh's twin,
> From this cynic world and old,
> Some strange jest had placed him in,
> Eldorado and the morn
> Unto these he shall return.

Whither goest, adventurer?
With the East upon thine eyes,
Stepping with the old blithesome air
On the last splendid enterprise;
Who hast heard the pipers play
Over the hills and far away.

It is a great gift this, which on a sudden changes our gloom to a glory, and only those have it who are born under a happy star. She imagines celestial adventures for those boys who met death in the Great War; and who can say, after the purifying fires, what transfiguration may take place; that there may not be some exquisite mingling of earth-born desires made heavenly by the Holy Breath in some land of Heart's Delight? The fairy tales of the heart may come to be true for us in the Pleroma. I like her poetry best when she draws some shy beauty out of its recesses as in this little lyric which she named *Drought*, but overlooked when collecting her poetry. I rescue it because I love its dim colour and the brooding gentleness with which she fondles the thirsty leaves.

The sky is greyer than doves,
Hardly a zephyr moves,
Little voices complain;
The leaves rustle before the rain.

No thrush is singing now,
All is still in the heart o' the bough:
Only the trembling cry
Of young leaves murmuring thirstily.

Only the moan and stir
Of little hands in the bough I hear,
Beckoning the rain to come
Out of the evening, out of the gloom.

It was the same brooding love which enabled her to interpret *Summer Airs*, to pass beyond odour of heather or ocean, beyond memories of lakes and islands, to discover that some wind out of Paradise is mixed with the air we breathe.

What soft invisible loving clings
About my neck and lifts my hair?
The Eternal Love in these wild wings
Meets me and clasps me everywhere.

It is love only which has this clairvoyance, which discovers there is no hollow of air, no desolation of desert or stone which has not upon it somewhere the divine signature, which knows that nothing was born out of the Divine Mind which is not milk for its children. In the same spirit she looks upon lovely girlhood and her imagination realises it is somehow miraculous, and the lightest curl even was fashioned by the Magician of the Beautiful.

When a wild grace I see,
A turn of the neck, a curl, sweet hands, clear eyes,
Gentleness, courtesy, dignity:
In all these gifts Thee I surmise, surprise.

All beauty and delight:
  Skin like a rose, a beauteous shape, an air
Free and enchanting, give my weary sight
  Glimpses of Thee, Thou Beauty past compare.

Strength, courage also are Thine,
  And joy of youth and wings that cleave the blue,
Low singing and soft voices, I divine
  In these Thy Beauty, ancient yet ever new.

Someone to whom I read this thought it doctrine rather than poetry. But what poet has there been, even the greatest, Dante or Milton, who has not many pages where the intellectual anatomy which underlay their fantasy was apparent? They appear the greater to our imagination because of this, that they wrote with their whole being and not merely out of part of their being, and I like to find under colour of rose or pearl what Rossetti called "fundamental brain-work". But I do not think those verses I quoted philosophy. It was intuition rather, which is as precious a thing as imagination, which made a light beauty suddenly turn her thought inward to the original Majesty. Every creature seeks for the things which satisfy its own nature, and I like Katharine Tynan's poetry best where I find her nature harmonious with my own. Others may take much more pleasure in poems whose art I admire but which are born out of emotions I

have not shared, or use a symbolism with which my childhood was not familiar, so that I could not make it a stepping-stone to the reality it stands for. But to the majority of my countrymen the symbols she uses are keys to a sanctuary they often enter. I am like those others I spoke of who go on lonely adventures. I was not fortunate enough to be born under a happy star.

A. E.

I was born under a kind star
In a green world withouten any war;
My eyes opened on quiet fields and hills,
Orchards and gardens, cowslips, daffodils,
Love for my rising-up and lying-down,
Amid the beautiful pastures green and brown—
The rose leaned through my window set ajar—
I was born under a kind star.

In a green land without hunger and drouth,
God gave a gift of singing to my mouth,
A little song and quiet that was heard
Through the full choir of many a golden bird;
As a little brook in grasses running sweet,
Full of refreshment for the noontide heat.
Some came and drank of me from near and far—
I was born under a kind star.

I was fed full with bliss past my desert,
And when grief came, was comfort for my hurt.
I had long nights of sleep that had no ear
For the struck hours, the shrilling Chanticleer.
My days were busy and glad from day to dark,
My heart leaped high and merry with the lark.
I shall die young though many my years are—
For I was born under a kind star.

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THE OLD COUNTRY

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THE OLD COUNTRY

As I go home at end of day, the old road,
Through the enchanted country full of my dreams,
By the dim hills, under the pellucid o'er-arching sky,
Home to the West, full of great clouds and the sunset,
Past the cattle that stand in rich grass to the knees,
It is not I who go home: it is not I.

Here is the turn we took, going home with my father,
The little feet of the pony trotting fast,
Home by the winding lane full of music of water,
He and I, we were enough for each other;
Going home through the silver, the pearly twilight,
I content with my father, he with his daughter.

Magical country, full of memories and dreams,
My youth lies in the crevices of your hills;
Here in the silk of your grass by the edge of the meadows,
Every flower and leaf has its memories of you.
Home was home then and the people friendly,
And you and I going home in the lengthening shadows.

Now I go home no more, though the swift car glides,
Carries me fast through the dear, the heavenly country.
No one knows me, the cottages show strange faces,
They who were kindly, who bid me "God save you!" of yore,
They are gone, they are flown, and only the country's the same,
And you sleeping so quietly under the grass.

SUMMER AIRS

This air's a lovely thing: it blows
  Softer than any kisses are;
Touches my cheek like a wet rose
  Drenched in all sweetness, near and far.

There's heather in it, miles on miles,
  Rough sweetness of great seas that break
On Achill cliffs and Clew's dear isles;
  On many a mountain, many a lake!

What soft invisible loving clings
  About my neck and lifts my hair?
The Eternal Love in these wild wings
  Meets me and clasps me everywhere.

Thou madest for me this air, this wind,
  These heavenly sweets for me, for me!
That I might live and thrive, O kind!
  Fed on the very Breath of Thee.

THE DOVES

The house where I was born,
Where I was young and gay,
Grows old amid its corn,
Amid its scented hay.

Moan of the cushat dove,
In silence rich and deep;
The old head I love
Nods to its quiet sleep.

Where once were nine or ten
Now two keep house together;
The doves moan and complain
All day in the still weather.

What wind, bitter and great,
Has swept the country's face,
Altered, made desolate
The heart-remembered place?

What wind, bitter and wild,
Has swept the towering trees
Beneath whose shade a child
Long since gathered heartsease?

Under the golden eaves
The house is still and sad,
As though it grieves and grieves
For many a lass and lad.

The cushat doves complain
All day in the still weather;
Where once were nine or ten
But two keep house together.

THE GREY MORNINGS

The grey mornings I well remember,
The grey mountains new-waked from slumber,
The grey dews on the trees and hedges,
And in grey distance the grey sea's edges.

Cool it was, sweet beyond telling,
The grey-green hay in the pastures smelling,
The grey meadows wet as a river,
The grey dew where the grass-blades quiver.

Grey gulls and the sea-grey swallow
Take the track that my heart would follow.
Home from the heat and the cruel weather,
That I and my heart might fare together!

Purple-grey are the wild hills showing,
Silver-grey is the west wind blowing.
O grey fields and grey hills behind you,
Would my feet might follow and find you!

A MEMORY

This is just the weather, a wet May and blowing,
All the shining, shimmering leaves tossing low and high,
When my father used to say: " 'Twill be the great mowing!
God's weather's good weather, be it wet or dry."

Blue were his eyes and his cheeks were so ruddy,
He was out in all weathers, up and down the farm;
With the pleasant smile and the word for a wet body:
" Sure, the weather's God's weather. Who can take the harm?"

With a happy word he'd silence all repining
While the hay lay wet in field and the cattle died,
When the rain rained every day and no sun was shining:
" Ah, well, God is good," he'd say, even while he sighed.

In the parched summer with the corn not worth saving,
Every field bare as your hand and the beasts to feed,
Still he kept his heart up, when other folk were raving:
"God will send the fodder; 'tis He that knows the need."

A wet May, a wild May; he used to rise up cheery
In the grey of the morning for market and for fair.
Now he sleeps the whole year long, though days be bright, be dreary,
In God's weather that's good weather he sleeps without a care.

Now, 'tis just the weather, a wild May and weeping,
How the blackbird sang and sang 'mid the tossing leaves!
When my father used to say: "'Twill be the great reaping;
God send fine weather to carry home the sheaves!"

THE EXILE

Since I have lost the mountains, I
Look for them in the waste of sky,
And think to see at the street's close
The lovely line of blue and rose
The mountains keep that once I knew.

There are no mountains here at all,
But only the blank roof and wall
Of many houses red and grey.
I had forgotten the old way
The mountains keep in rain and dew.

Even in the pleasant country places,
Where the fields' faces are friends' faces,
The mountains I shall not forget,
The mountains come between us yet,
Between me and the woods and streams.

The wind that blows across them calls
Ever at dawn and evenfalls,
And I am suddenly forlorn.
Across the pastures and ripe corn
I see the mountains in my dreams.

THE LITTLE HILL

THERE's a little hill, a round green hill, in my
own country;
And shaped like a little breast it is, so round
to see;
Oh, shaped like a little breast it is, so smooth,
so mild.
The milky breast of the earth it is, warm for
the child.

There's a little hill and a hundred streams
flow down its side.
And I would that I might creep there now,
creep there and hide,
And drink my fill of the honeyed milk, drink
and be full,
And the thirst of the heart be quenched in me
in the shadows cool!

There's never a day of the hottest days but
you'd find there yet
The plash of the water under your feet and a
fragrance wet;

And the water-weeds they stand to their knees
in the emerald flow;
And the silver fin of a trout 'll be in the pool
below.

There's a blackbird, too, in the dusk and dew,
and he sings a strain,
Must draw the ache from the weary heart and
the fever pain.
Sure, he'll sing his song all the evening long,
full of trouble and joy—
The honeyed note and the golden throat and
the heart of a boy.

To that little hill in my own country if I might
come
And lie at rest on that milky breast in the
fields at home!
There's dust in my heart and dust in my
throat, and I crying still
For the song I knew in the dusk and dew and
the little green hill.

THE OLD LOVE

Out of my door I step into
The country, all her scent and dew,
Nor travel there by a hard road,
Dusty and far from my abode.

The country washes to my door
Green miles on miles in soft uproar,
The thunder of the woods, and then
The backwash of green surf again.

Beyond the feverfew and stocks,
The guelder-rose and hollyhocks;
Outside my trellised porch a tree
Of lilac frames a star for me—

A stretch of primrose and pale green
To hold the tender Hesper in;
Hesper that by the moon makes pale
Her silver keel and silver sail.

The country silence wraps me quite,
Silence and song and pure delight;
The country beckons all the day
Smiling, and but a step away.

This is that country seen across
How many a league of love and loss,
Prayed for and longed for, and as far
As fountains in the desert are.

This is that country at my door,
Whose fragrant airs run on before,
And call me when the first birds stir
In the green wood to walk with her.

BLESSINGS

God bless the little orchard brown
Where the sap stirs these quickening days.
Soon in a white and rosy gown
The trees will give great praise.

God bless the little rivers sweet
That chatter over golden sands;
When I was young they led my feet
Into enchanted lands.

God bless the little fields so green,
The fields that wore a friendly face,
And all the tender hills that lean
O'er the belovèd place.

God bless the lark that sings and soars,
The nest that little builders make,
The chestnut and the sycamores,
And many a twisted brake.

The hedges where the sweetbriar twined
With crab-apple and the whitethorn.
God knows I have them in my mind
Many a night and morn!

THE IRISH PIPES

I HEARD the piper playing,
The piper old and blind,
And knew its secret saying—
The voice of the summer wind.

I heard clear waters falling,
Lapping from stone to stone;
The wood-dove crying and calling,
Ever alone, alone.

I heard the bells of the heather
Ring in the summer breeze,
Soft stir of fur and feather
And quiet hum of bees.

The piper drew me yearning
Into the dim grey lands,
Whence there is no returning
Although I wring my hands.

There to the piper's crooning
I saw my dead again,
All in a happy nooning
Of golden sun and rain.

You piper, kind and hoary,
  Your pipes upon your knee,
If I should tell my story,
  The things you piped for me,

The folk would leave their selling
  And bid their buying go,
If I could but be telling
  The things you let me know.

TO THE MOTHER

I HEARD them talking and praising the grey
French country,
Dotted with red roofs high and steep,
With just one grey stone church-tower keeping sentry
Over the quiet dead asleep;
Grey skies and greyer dunes, as grey as duty,
Grey sands where grey gulls flew;
And I said in my passionate heart, they know
not beauty,
Beloved, who know not you.

I heard them praise the gold of the stormy
sunset
And the pale moon's path on the sea;
I thought of your clouds with their wild
magnificent onset,
Your eagles screaming free.
I thought of your mild, kind mountains,
angel-bosomed,
Quiet in dusk and dew.
What flower of beauty that ever in Paradise
blossomed,
Love, was denied to you?

I thought of the pale green dawns, and gold days' closes.
Dear, I shall not forget
Nights when your skies were full of the flying roses,
Millions and millions yet.
All your still lakes and your rivers broad and gracious,
Dear mountain glens I knew;
When the trump of judgment sounds and the world's in ashes
I shall remember you.

Remember! foretaste of Heaven you are, O Mother!
By bog-lands, brown and bare,
Where every little pool is the blue sky's brother,
Your wild larks spring in the air.
Land of my heart! smiling I heard their praises,
Smiling and sighing too.
I would give this grey French land for a handful of daisies
Plucked from the breast of you.

THE CALL

The unforgotten voices call at twilight,
In the grey dawning, in the quiet night hours;
Voices of mountains and of waters falling,
Voices of wood-doves in the tender valleys,
Voices of flowery meadows, golden cornfields:
Yea, all the lonely bog-lands have their voices.

Voices of church-bells over the green country,
Memories of home, of youth. O unforgotten!
When all the world's asleep the voices call me,
Come home, acushla, home! Why did you leave us?
The little voices hurt my heart to weeping,
There are small fingers plucking at my heart-strings.

Let me alone, be still, I will not hear you.
Why would I come to find the old places lonely?
They are all gone, the loving, the true-hearted;

Beautiful country of the dead, I come not:
How would I meet the cold eyes of the stranger?
All the nests of my heart are cold and empty.

I will not come for all your soft compelling,
Little fingers plucking me by the heart-strings,
In the grey dawning, in the quiet night-hours,
Because the dead, the darling dead, return not
And all the nests of my heart are cold and lonely.
They will not give me peace at dawn and twilight.

AT EUSTON STATION

Yon is the train I used to take
In the good days of yore,
When I went home for love's dear sake,
I who go home no more.

The station lights flare in the wind,
The night is blurred with rain,
And there was someone, old and kind,
Who will not come again.

Oh, that's an Irish voice I hear,
And that's an Irish face,
And these will come when dawn is near
To the belovèd place.

And these will see when day is grey
And lightest winds are still
The long coast-line by Dublin Bay
With exquisite hill on hill.

I would not follow if I might,
Who came so oft of old;

No window-pane holds me a light,
The warm hearth-fire is cold.

There is the train I used to take.
Be blest from shore to shore,
O land of love and of heart-break!
But I go home no more.

THE FIELDS

Whene'er I take my walks abroad
And see the fields outspread,
My heart leaps up to thank that God
Who such sweet things has made.

But dear as are the fields I know,
And like friends' faces kind,
Some, more than others, when I go,
I carry in my mind.

Some, more than others, beckon me
From out the dusty town,
With " Come and lie beneath a tree
And fling your burthen down."

Some, more than others, make a breast
Where my tired thoughts may lean,
With " Turn again and take your rest
All in a shadow green."

And why a certain field should prove,
When far away I range,
More than another in my love,
I find it passing strange.

For each displays the velvet floor,
And each the grove ashine;
And some have purling streams, and more
The quietly breathing kine.

I love them all; yet when I leave
And in the sad town mourn,
Some haunt me at the morn and eve,
And call me to return.

And each has many birds and flowers,
Each spreads a golden sheet
When the sweet Summer's in the bowers
And Cuckoo's calling sweet.

And one I never hear at all
Wherever I may roam;
While one at dawn and evenfall
Calls me and calls me home.

Dear are the fields; and yet 'tis plain
One has one's dearest friends
Among the fields as among men;
And there the wonder ends.

A CHILD'S DAY

When I was a little child
It was always golden weather.
My days stretched out so long
From rise to set of sun,
I sang and danced and smiled—
My light heart like a feather—
From morn to evensong;
The child's days are done.

I used to wake with the birds—
The little birds wake early,
For the sunshine leaps and plays
On the mother's head and wing—
And the clouds were white as curds,
The apple-trees stood pearly:
I always think of the child's days
As one unending Spring.

I knew where all flowers grew.
I used to lie in the meadow
Ere reaping-time and mowing-time
And carting home the hay.

And O the skies were blue!
O drifting light and shadow!
It was another time and clime—
The little child's sweet day.

And in the long day's waning
The skies grew rose and amber,
And palest green and gold,
With a moon's white flame:
And if came wind and raining,
Grey hours I don't remember;
Nor how the warm year waxèd cold,
And deathly Autumn came.

Only of that young time
The bright things I remember;
How orchard boughs were laden red,
And blackberries so brave
Came ere the frost and rime—
The dreary dark November,
With dripping black boughs overhead,
And dead leaves on a grave.

THE MORNING FIELDS

I LOOKED from my window
At peep of day:
The fields were sleeping
In the mist and grey.

So fast their slumber,
They never stirred,
Though from the coppice
Piped the first bird.

So strange their faces
As the cold light grew;
They might be spirits
Of the fields I knew.

The pale light breaking
Over the hill,
Streaked with cold amber
And the daffodil,

Waked not these sluggards;
Nor Chanticleer,
Winding his horn
For the folk to hear,

But when in his splendour
The sun leaped high,
They stretched and opened
One drowsy eye.

The fields of morning,
Withdrawn apart,
Were cold as winter
To my frightened heart.

So far in dreaming
They had wandered, strayed;
For one chill moment
I thought them dead.

THE DARK ROSE

Though all my loves of old have passed away
And lie at rest wrapped in your holy clay,
I do not therefore love you less or more,
Seeing I love you for yourself, asthore:
My own land, with your misty vales and hills
Where my heart wanders by the happy rills.

I love you for yourself. Your beauty green
Calls to me in the night-watches between
The day and day; and though I never come
Your stars are as a million lights of home
Upon your sacred hill-tops, crest on crest,
Ere the first bird has wakened the first nest.

I love you, love you for your own sweet sake.
Ere the first bird awakens the first brake,
I dream of you amid your quiet seas.
Let others tell your history, memories,
Counting your heroes. Not for these or those
I love you; only for yourself, Dark Rose.

I love you, not for any living or dead,
For any gold or any dear black head.

Yea, were you desert, I should love no less
You with your mother-breast of milkiness,
Of milk and honey, that still calls me back,
My feet, my heart, on the familiar track.

Your hidden glens, your singing waters call,
Allure me still at dawn and evenfall;
The wind that ruffles all your meadows grey
Sighs in my heart at dawn and close of day—
Sighs in my heart and will not let me be.
The wind from over your mountains troubles
me.

MOTHER AND CHILD

ANY WOMAN

I AM the pillars of the house;
The keystone of the arch am I.
Take me away, and roof and wall
Would fall to ruin utterly.

I am the fire upon the hearth,
I am the light of the good sun,
I am the heat that warms the earth,
Which else were colder than a stone.

At me the children warm their hands;
I am their light of love alive.
Without me cold the hearthstone stands,
Nor could the precious children thrive.

I am the twist that holds together
The children in its sacred ring,
Their knot of love, from whose close tether
No lost child goes a-wandering.

I am the house from floor to roof,
I deck the walls, the board I spread;
I spin the curtains, warp and woof,
And shake the down to be their bed.

I am their wall against all danger,
Their door against the wind and snow.
Thou Whom a woman laid in manger,
Take me not till the children grow!

THE MEETING

As I went up and he came down, my little six-year boy,
Upon the stairs we met and kissed, I and my tender Joy.
O fond and true, as lovers do, we kissed and clasped and parted;
And I went up and he went down, refreshed and happy-hearted.

What need was there for any words, his face against my face?
And in the silence heart to heart spoke for a little space
Of tender things and thoughts on wings and secrets none discovers;
And I went up and he went down, a pair of happy lovers.

His clinging arms about my neck, what need was there for words?
O little heart that beat so fast like any fluttering bird's!
"I love," his silence said; "I love," my silence answered duly;
And I went up and he went down comforted wonderfully.

HIS KNOWLEDGE

" No one will love you if you're naughty," said
His nurse, demure and chill.
The Three-years Wisdom shook his bird-bright head,
And answered, " Mother will."

He built a castle of his bricks the while,
Poised tower and bastion still;
As one who suffers Folly with a smile,
He answered, " Mother will."

TALISMAN

All Heaven in my arm,
The child for a charm
'Gainst fear and 'gainst sorrow,
To-day and to-morrow.
The child for a charm
Betwixt me and harm.

O mouth, full of kisses!
Small body of blisses!
Your hand on my neck
And your cheek to my cheek.
What shall hurt me or harm
With all Heaven in my arm?

HOLY INNOCENTS

Gold on gold, snow on snow,
Height on height, row on row;
Greater in number these
Than the sands of the seas.

Yea, past all counting far,
Flower on flower, star on star,
Dimpled shoulder, cheek of peach,
As they lean each to each.

Golden heads, brows of pearl,
Oh, many a boy and girl,
Oh, many a girl and boy,
Mother's grief, mother's joy.

But amid snow and gold,
Gathered warm from the cold,
Fairer than gold, more fine,
Should be two that are mine.

IMMORTALITY

So I have sunk my roots in earth
Since that my pretty boys had birth;
And fear no more the grave and gloom,
I, with the centuries to come.

As the tree blossoms so bloom I,
Flinging wild branches to the sky;
Renew each year my leafy suit,
Strike with the years a deeper root;

Shelter a thousand birds to be,
A thousand herds give praise to me;
And in my kind and grateful shade
How many a weary head be laid.

I clothe myself without a stain.
In me a child is born again,
A child that looks with innocent eyes
On a new world with glad surprise.

The old mistakes are all undone,
And the old sins are purged and gone.

Old wounds and scars have left no trace,
There are no lines in this young face.

To hear the cuckoo the first time,
And 'mid new roses in the prime
To read the poets newly. This,
Year after year shall be my bliss.

Of me shall Love be born anew,
I shall be loved and lover too;
Years after this poor body has died
Shall be the bridegroom and the bride.

Of me shall mothers spring to know
The mother's bliss, the mother's woe;
And children's children yet to be
Shall learn their prayers about my knee.

And many million lights of home
Shall light for me the time to come.
Unto me much shall be forgiven,
I that make many souls for Heaven.

THE CHILD

The little feet running upon the floor
Bring back to me youth and the golden weather,
O little feet, long lost, long hungered for;
My heart springs up light as the grey dove's feather,
O little feet running upon the floor!

O lovely kisses from a sweet wet mouth,
Fragrant and dewy as wet garden roses,
Kisses that bring me the belovèd youth,
Sweet as soft rain drenching dry garden closes,
The lovely kisses from a sweet wet mouth.

O little arms clinging about my neck,
Holding me fast, and silken cheek and fine.
God pity mothers who this night must take
Farewell of some sweet thing like this of mine,
With nevermore soft arms about the neck.

God gives the dearest gifts over and over;
O little grandson, youth comes with your kiss!
God gives me back my youth and my lost lover,
And all the precious things were mine and his,
And even the sweets the heart thought past recover.

THE NURSE

Such innocent companionship
Is hers, whether she wake or sleep,
'Tis scarcely strange her face should wear
The young child's grave and innocent air.

All the night long she hath by her
The quiet breathing, the soft stir,
Nor knows how, in that tender place,
The children's angels veil the face.

She wakes at dawn with bird and child
To earth new-washed and reconciled,
The hour of silence and of dew,
When God hath made His world anew.

She sleeps at eve, about the hour
Of bedtime for the bird and flower,
When daisies, evening primroses,
Know that the hour of closing is.

Her daylight thoughts are all on toys
And games for darling girls and boys,
Lest they should fret, lest they should weep,
Strayed from their heavenly fellowship.

She is as pretty and as brown
As the wood's children far from town,
As bright-eyed glancing, shy of men
As any squirrel, any wren.

Tender she is to beast and bird,
As in her breast some memory stirred
Of days when these were kin of hers
Who go in feathers and in furs.

A child, yet is the children's law,
And rules by love and rules by awe,
And, stern at times, is kind withal
As a girl-baby with her doll.

Outside the nursery door there lies
The world with all its griefs and sighs,
Its needs, its sins, its stains of sense:
Within is only innocence.

ANY MOTHER

There is no height, no depth, my own, could
set us apart,
Body of mine and soul of mine: heart of my
heart!

There is no sea so deep, my own, no mountain
so high,
That I should not come to you if I heard you
cry.

There is no Hell so sunken, no Heaven so
steep,
Where I should not seek my own, find you
and keep.

Now you are round and soft to see, sweet as a
rose,
Not a stain on my spotless one, white as the
snows.

If some day you came to me heavy with sin,
I, your mother, would run to the door and let
you in.

I would wash you white again with my tears
and grief,
Body of mine and soul of mine, till you found
relief.

Though you had sinned all sins there are
'twixt east and west,
You should find my arms wide for you, your
head on my breast.

Child, if I were in Heaven one day and you
were in Hell—
Angels white as my spotless one stumbled
and fell—

I would leave for you the fields of God and
Queen Mary's feet,
Straight to the heart of Hell would go, seek-
ing my sweet.

God mayhap would turn Him around at
sound of the door:
Who is it goes out from Me to come back no
more?

Then the blessed Mother of God would say
from her throne:
Son, 'tis a mother goes to Hell, seeking her
own.

Body of mine, and Soul of mine, born of me,
Thou who wert once little Jesus beside my knee,

It is like to that all mothers are made: Thou madest them so.
Body of mine and Soul of mine, do I not know?

COWSLIPS

The children run and leap
By a most heavenly hill.
And I will give you the Keys of Heaven
To use as you will.

The keys are small and sweet;
Gold keys from a girdle swung;
The cowslip opens the Gates of Heaven
To the pure and the young.

The children are gold and white—
Gold heads the mothers have kissed;
The children carry the Keys of Heaven
Swung at the wrist.

Children, why would ye go?
Here is a heavenly land.
The children swinging the Keys of Heaven
Slip from your hand.

Is it not Heaven enough
Here for a little while?

The children kissing the Keys of Heaven
Listen and smile.

The children are white as snow;
They walk in gold to their knees;
The children who hold the Keys of Heaven
Go where they please.

HIS WISDOM

(Six Years Old)

His feet whene'er they walk abroad
  By city ways must wend;
Who cares? he says, *since every road*
  Is country in the end.

Lover of daisies and the grass,
  Tree, bird and flower his friend;
The dreary houses cease to pass,
  All's country in the end.

The walls shut out the sun, the air,
  Mean sights depress, offend;
Yet every street's a traveller
  For country in the end.

His thoughts through smoke and shadows dull
  Like the lark's song ascend.
Somewhere, he says, 'tis beautiful;
  All's country in the end.

Beyond the clouds, beyond the smoke,
In a green space descend,
And meet with clear-eyed country-folk,
And country in the end.

Here moon and stars have dimmed their light,
Hard trouble's hard to mend;
Yet round some corner out of sight,
Lies country in the end.

Ho, traveller, take the stony road!
Up, hearts, though shoulders bend!
For even the hardest road, thank God,
Finds country in the end.

THE CHILD AT PRAYER

A BABY to a Baby prays,
O Infant Jesus, meek and mild,
From 'mid the glory and the rays
Look on a little child.

As one child to another may,
He talks without a thought of fear,
Commending to a Child to-day
All that a child holds dear:—

His father, mother, brother, nurse,
His cat, his dog, his bird, his toys,
Things that make up the universe
Of darling girls and boys.

All sheep and horses, lambs and cows,
He counts them o'er, a motley crew,
And children in the neighbour's house,
And all the people too.

A child lifts up his little hands
Unto a Child; and it may be
The Host of Heaven at gazing stands
That tender sight to see.

THE SICK CHILD

He for whom the world was made
Cannot lift his heavy head,
All its pretty curls puffed out,
Burnt with fevers, parched with drought.

He, the tyrant, whimsical,
With the round world for his ball,
In a dreadful patience lies,
Old since yesterday and wise.

Like a martyr on the rack
Smiles, his soft lips burnt to black,
While the fever still devours
His small body, sweet as flowers.

Dreadful patience like a sword
Stabs his mother's heart, dear Lord:
Make him naughty, wild and gay,
As he was but yesterday!

Little services he pays
With his kisses and his praise,

While his eyes ask pardon still
That he's troublesome and ill.

He lies smiling, with a fire
In his cheeks blown high and higher,
By the wind of fever fanned.
Lord, his kisses on my hand!

Give me back my boy, I pray,
Turbulent, of yesterday:
Not this angel, like a sword
In his mother's heart, dear Lord.

THE MOTHER

Great passions I awake that must
Bow any woman to the dust
With fear lest she should fail to rise
As high as those enamoured eyes.

Now for those flying days and sweet
I sit in Beauty's Mercy-Seat.
My smiles, my favours I award,
Since I am beautiful, adored.

They praise my cheeks, my lips, my eyes,
With Love's most exquisite flatteries,
Covet my hands that they may kiss
And to their ardent bosoms press.

My foot upon the nursery stair
Makes them a music rich and rare;
My skirt that rustles as I come
For very rapture strikes them dumb.

What jealousies of word and glance!
The light of my poor countenance
Lights up their world that else were drear.
" But you are lovely, mother dear! "

I go not to my grave but I
Know Beauty's full supremacy:
Like Cleopatra's self, I prove
The very heights and depths of Love.

So to be loved, so to be wooed,
Oh, more than mortal woman should!
What if she fail or fall behind!
Lord, make me worthy, keep them blind!

THE RECOMPENSE

God made a Garden first for Man
Where He and Man might walk together,
Before the bitter days began
And when 'twas always perfect weather;
A garden full of fruit and flowers,
The butterfly, the bee, the dew;
Man had enough in those sweet bowers
Before the old snake wriggled through.

But when poor Man was driven away,
Hobbled and sad, from those bright portals,
When there was nothing more to say
Between the stript unhappy mortals;
When Eve went shivering in the wind,
With all her sweetness nipt by frost,
God put it into Adam's mind
To build a House; so all's not lost!

'Twas built of clay and wattle boughs.
So comfortable 'twas, the creeping
Out of the rain into their House,
To dream of Eden in their sleeping.

He taught them next to capture Fire—
  The wild sprite of the roaring storm,
And tether him to their desire
  Upon a hearthstone bright and warm.

Yet there was something incomplete;
  They wept for their remembered blisses;
Till God slipt something wondrous sweet
  Betwixt His anger and their kisses:
The Woman shall make Home: He said:
  With children, and the hearth-fires burning,
And with her bosom for his bed,
  My Adam praise Me night and morning.

THE COUNTRY CHILD

The Country Child has fragrances
He breathes about him as he goes;
Clear eyes that look at distances,
And in his cheek the wilding rose.

The sun, the sun himself will stain
The country face to its own red,
The red-gold of the ripening grain,
And bleach to white the curly head.

He rises to the morning lark,
Sleeps with the evening primroses,
Before the curtain of the dark
Lets down its splendour, starred with bees.

He sleeps so sweet without a dream
Under brown cottage eaves and deep,
His window holds one stray moonbeam
As though an angel kept his sleep.

He feeds on honest country fare,
Drinks the clear water of the spring;
Green carpets wait him everywhere,
Where he may run, where he may sing.

He hath his country lore by heart,
And what is friend and what is foe;
Hath conned Dame Nature's book apart—
Her child since he began to grow.

When he is old, when he goes sad,
Hobbling upon a twisted knee,
He keeps somewhat of joys he had,
Since an old countryman is he.

He keeps his childhood's innocencies,
Though his old head be bleached to snow.
Forget-me-nots still hold his eyes,
And in his cheeks old roses blow.

THE NEW BOY

He never knew before how heavenly the places,
Light-loved but yesterday, the fields of his home;
Gleam to his sick eyes the lost belovèd faces,
A mirage, a water-well, where he may not come.

Dear was the white road, winding and turning,
Where his free feet ran nor knew them free.
Beacons the low house, a heaven to his yearning,
A heaven of accustomed things where he may not be.

Round the smooth cricket ground the woods, a watch keeping,
Draw a dark barrier where he may not pass.

What is work? What is play? The sad hours go creeping.
His heaven's out of reach, and none cares, alas!

His tears make a water-course; his poor cheeks grimy;
His heart hangs so heavy and his feet are lead.
Oh, what to him is *Audio*? And what is *Eime*?
Who only wants his mother's breast for his aching head.

Boys alike and masters, phantoms to his vision.
The high-class room walls the cage to the bird.
He heeds not the chill kindness nor the sly derision,
Sick for his mother's kiss, his father's word.

Far, far away, beyond those drear spaces,
Beyond the sullen hours that creep away,
Lie the deliverance, the heavenly places.
He strangles with his sobs till the grey day.

GREENSLEEVES

The little spirit of the place
Glides, spirit-like, over the grass;
She is five years old, five years, alas!
Beauty runs in the hour-glass.

She has a kirtle, straight and sweet,
Of the spring's green as it is meet,
And delicate, bare, dew-dabbled feet;
Her hair of the squirrel red is it.

Her eyes are of the squirrel red,
Freckles, like golden drops, are shed
On the milk skin; her face is made
A little moon in her hair's shade.

Her orchard goes in flower and fruit;
At night the nightingale comes to it,
The thrush and the blackbird call their suit
Ere ever the nightingale is mute.

Adown the pale green avenues
Spring scatters her whites and blues.

The little feet amid the dews
Have a queen's carpet for their use.

The place is holy and the hour,
And only gentle things have power;
The honeysuckle falls in a shower,
The wind ruffles the wind-flower.

The little spirit, still and wise,
Steals through the evening mysteries,
Shadow and silence in her eyes.
The night has frankincense and spice.

THE CHILDREN

The dumb child and the blind child
With God are housèd warm,
And He has gathered the crippled child
Within the curve of His arm.

The child that has no mother dear
Against His heart lies close,
What strange and wonderful tales they hear
Under the rose, the rose.

The sick child and the sad child
Are rocked on mighty knees,
The eyes of God are a mother's eyes,
His kiss a father's kiss.

Lost lambs are playing and straying
Upon the vernal sod,
Dearest are they who never played
To the full heart of God.

As He walks in His garden
In the cool eventide,
His lame lamb and His crooked lamb
Leap and run by his side.

He has touched the blind child's eyeballs,
And straight he doth behold
The Kingdom of God in living light
Of emerald and gold.

When all His birds are singing
Their love-songs fresh and clear,
The dumb child's singing, wild and shrill,
Is sweetest in His ear.

When they lie down at evening,
God knows their sleep is sweet!
The garments of God have wrapped them close
From their head to their feet.

VOCATION

For this, for this was I foreseen,
For this was born and made,
To make a house 'mid leaves green
All in a tender shade.

To build a house both warm and kind
Amid the sad world's dearth.
God had the children in His mind
The hour He gave me birth.

For this He tempered wind and storm,
Kept me in heat and chill,
To build a house both bright and warm
Against the powers of ill.

To build a house on a clear height,
Nor see its light grow dim,
That draws the children home by night
And keeps a thought of Him.

I set a light on a high hill
And from their heavenly place
The children's angels, grave and still,
They say: God give you grace!

For this, for this was I fashioned,
To give them back again,
Some day—come kiss me, Golden-Head!—
Without a fleck or stain.

I am the servant of the Lord.
If one day He should tell:
Now name thine own fee and reward
Who kept My trust so well.

Lord: I would say: Thou hast repaid,
Yea, more than seven times seven,
Who in a house in a green shade
Made me the children's heaven.

THE CHILDREN'S WAY

The children bear our froward mood,
Patient, enduring still.
Our anger like a heat in the blood
That strikes with little skill.

Because our way is choked with tares
And fears beset our sleep;
Because we weary Heaven with prayers
Lest that the children weep.

The children must be warmed and fed,
The children most adored:
Give them this day their daily bread!
What of to-morrow, Lord?

Therefore we strike them at their play
And grieve their hearts and chill:
O Lord, be patient with the clay
Thou'st moulded to Thy will.

See, Lord, the children understand!
Loyal and piteous,
They take the wounding from Love's hand.
See, Lord,—they bear with us.

THE CHILDLESS WOMAN

The children she had missed,
That never yet had birth,
Unwarmed, unfed, unkissed,
Soured all her joy of earth.

But when her day was done
And none was desolate,
Dusty and all alone,
She knocked at Heaven's gate,

Birds from a parapet
Called to her clear and shrill;
With "Mother! Mother!" so wild and sweet,
And they were never still.

They were no birds at all,
But children small and bright;
When she came past the high wall
They were as birds in flight.

One was clasping her hand;
One was hugging her gown;
The littlest one of all the band
She lifted nor set him down.

Her hungry heart and cold
Was filled full and to spare:
One had her feet to hold,
One was kissing her hair.

The heart in her side
Forgot the ancient wrong:
When "Mother! Mother! Mother!" they cried,
It soared like a bird's song.

Her arms were full of children,
As they were birds in nest.
The littlest one crept softly in,
So he lay in her breast.

God's people passing by,
They smiled at her heart's ease;
"This mother of many children,
Her flowers grow to her knees."

They dance, they laugh, they run,
She laughs with them at play;
Their pleasures are not done
Nor their sweet holiday.

When they lie down at night,
  Soft pillows, downiest beds,
Her arms are full of her birds bright,
  Dark heads and golden heads.

She draws them close to her,
  Lest haply it should seem
That the new life in some wild fear
  Was a dream, but a dream.

SONGS OF LOVE, LIFE, AND DEATH

GEORGE WYNDHAM

(*June 8th*, 1913)

Soldier, poet, courtier,
  He was these and more than these.
He must go to find his peer,
  Over mountains, over seas,
To some starry world afar
Where the constellations are.

Traveller from the realms of gold,
  Sidney's brother, Raleigh's twin,
From this cynic world and old
  Some strange jest hath placed him in,
Eldorado and the morn
Unto these he shall return.

Whither goest, adventurer?
  With the East upon thine eyes,
Stepping with the old blithesome air
  On the last splendid enterprise;
Who hast heard the piper play
Over the hills and far away.

Dear Prince Charming, fair and young,
'Scaped from sickness and sad age,
Take a blessing and a song
When thou goest on pilgrimage,
Where the lark goes, high on high,
The white road thou travellest by.

TO THE BELOVED

You were a part of the green country,
Of the grey hills and the quiet places;
They are not the same, the fields and the mountains,
Without the lost and beloved faces,
And you were a part of the sweet country.

There's a road that winds by the foot of the mountains
Where I run in my dreams and you come to meet me,
With your blue eyes and your cheeks' old roses,
The old fond smile that was quick to greet me.
They are not the same, the fields and the mountains.

There is something lost, there is something lonely,
The birds are singing, the streams are calling,

The sun's the same, and the wind in the meadows.
But o'er your grave are the shadows falling,
The soul is missing, and all is lonely.

It is what they said: you were part of the country,
You were never afraid of the wind and weather,
I can hear in dreams the feet of your pony,
You and your pony coming together,
You will drive no more through the pleasant country.

You were part of the fields and mountains,
Everyone knew you, everyone loved you;
All the world was your friend and neighbour,
The women smiled and the men approved you.
They are not the same, the fields and the mountains.

I sigh no more for the pleasant places,
The longer I've lost you the more I miss you.
My heart seeks you in dreams and shadows,
In dreams I find you, in dreams I kiss you,
And wake, alas! to the lonely places.

THE MESSAGE

To the house of the widow,
Where she wept alone,
There came a kind woman
To the cold hearthstone:
God touches His own, she said,—
God touches His own.

Her tears fell so softly
Without sigh or moan:
God touches His own, she said,
'Tis well with His own.
What is grief? What is Death? she said,—
God touches His own.

In the desolate Winter day
Ere she was gone,
She turned once again to say
At the threshold stone:
What is life? What's the world? she said,—
God touches His own.

The wind from over the bogs
Like an echo blown,
Brought back the word she had said:
God touches His own.
What is grief? What is Death? she said,—
God touches His own.

EVERYTHING THAT I MADE

Everything that I made I used to bring to
you.
Was it a song, why, then, 'twas a song to
sing to you.
Was it a story, to you I was telling my story.
Ah, my dear, could you hear 'mid the bliss
and the glory?

Did anyone praise me, to you I said it all over.
My laughter for you: how we laughed in the
days past recover!
My tears and my trouble were for you: did
anyone grieve me
I carried it straight to the love that was sure
to relieve me.

O my dear, when aught happens, to you I
am turning,
Forgetting how far you have travelled since
then from my yearning.
There's nobody now to tell things to : your
house is so lonely:
And still I'm forgetting and bringing my
tale to you only.

The old days are over : how pleasant they
were while they lasted!
The sands were pure gold that ran out ere
we knew and were wasted.
And still I'm forgetting, ochone, that no
longer you're near me,
And turn to you still with my tale, and
there's no one to hear me.

THE IMMORTAL

Here, where I went in and out,
I no more may come and go.
This with sweetbriar fenced about
Is another's garden, so
His the master's foot to come
In each dear, remembered room.

Such a blank, forgetting face
The house turns that was my house,
Where I built a little space,
As the birds build in the boughs.
But the birds—the birds are gone
And the vernal days are done.

Forth I fare that once would stay.
I have neither walls nor roof,
Being a traveller, blithe and gay,
For a world that's weather-proof,
Where no rust eats in, no moth
Frets the sacred altar-cloth.

Open, skies, and let me through.
Here I struck no roots to be
Fearful of all winds that blew.
There I shall grow a tree, a tree
Where, in calm and shining weather,
My birds and I shall be together.

THE LAST QUARREL

As I lay sleeping on my bed,
Before the dawn of day,
I dreamt my only Love was dead—
My only Love alway.

Oh, dreadful anguish of a dream,
Beyond all waking grief!
In all the darkness not a gleam,
Nor in the pang relief.

Yet was I spared the sharpest sword,
The fiercest thrust thereof—
I had forgotten the last word
Wherewith I sped my Love.

ANNIVERSARY

There were so many to pray for, O dear grey head,
Your day went out unnoted; but when I slept,
Tender and all-forgiving you came from the dead,
Came in my dreams to remind me of trysts unkept.

Never a prayer was offered: no Mass was sung:
I thought day-long on the stranger in bitter need.
Into my dreams, my dear one, as when I was young,
You came and we clung together, O dear grey head.

All night long it was parting, and parting soon—
All night long I was weeping, and weeping sore—
That was the loneliest parting under the moon,
When the day and the night together met at the door.

Dear, but you had to travel so far to remind
  Your daughter who went forgetting, ah, cold as the clay!
All night long you stayed with me, fond and kind:
  All night long you grieved with me until the day.

ANY WIFE

Nobody knows but you and I, my dear,
And the stars, the spies of God, that lean and peer,
Those nights when you and I in a narrow strait
Were under the whips of God and desolate.
In extreme pain, in uttermost agony,
We bore the cross for each other, you and I,
When, through the darkest hour, the night of dread,
I suffered and you supported my head.

Ties that bind us together for life and death,
O hard-set fight in the darkness, shuddering breath,
Because a man can only bear as he may,
And find no tears for easing, the woman's way.
Anguish of pity, sharp in the heart like a sword;
Dost Thou not know, O Lord? Thou knowest, Lord,
What we endured for each other: our wounds were red
When he suffered and I supported his head.

Grief that binds us closer than smile or kiss,
Into the pang God slips the exquisite bliss.
You were my angel and I your angel, as he,
The angel, comforted Christ in His agony,
Lifting Him up from the earth that His blood
made wet,
Pillowing the Holy Head, dabbled in sweat.
Thou who wert under the scourges knowest
to prove
Love by its pangs, love that endures for love.

WHEN MARY DIED

She only died last week and yet
Suns might have risen, suns have set
A thousand: May's here like a bride,
And it was May when Mary died.

Incredible! We might last week
Have kissed her, praised her, heard her speak,
Who now has travelled far, so far
Beyond the moon and the day-star.

Since she has gone all Time and Space
Have lost their meanings: Mary's face
Grows dim in distance; like a light
Far down a distance infinite.

Last week! Why, this new grief we have
Is old as Time, old as the grave;
It was and will be; darkness spread
Over the world since Mary's dead.

Last week she died. The lilac-bough
Her eyes watched bud is blooming now;
The chestnut's lit her lamp since then;
And the lost cuckoo's come again.

A week ago! O endless space,
Since Mary heavenward turned her face!
And still the lilac's on the spray
That budded when she went away.

THE DREAMS

When I am sleeping I go in dreams
Far from the children and the man beside,
I meet with the dead and talk, nor strange it seems,
Since I've forgotten that they ever died.

They come in so quietly, the loved and lost,
There is so much to say in a short while.
Nowise strange it is that a dear ghost
Should be as the living and be glad and smile.

In the old garden we go hand in hand.
When friends are long parted there is much to say,
Much to be explained and to understand.
We walk in old gardens in a long-dead May.

Breasting the hill we go: we skirt the wheat,
By houses and gardens that once I knew.
All too fast the time goes when old friends meet.
Sure, I was starved for you, and you, and you!

Was I forgetting, then, the patient dead?
Mercy of mercies that in dreams they live!
They come seeking and finding me upon my bed.
In dreams they comfort me, in dreams forgive.

They come to me in my dreams, not cold and lone,
Oh, never sad ghosts they come to fret my sleep,
But just as I knew them in the days long gone.
When I wake from my dreams, I wake to weep.

THERE

THERE shall be no more partings there for ever,
She need not see the children going forth,
By sea and land and many a fordless river,
This to the East: that to the South, the North.
She shall not sit alone at the evenfall
With empty hands that had so much to keep,
Nor watch the shadow of clouds upon the wall,
Nor have the children only in her sleep.

There shall be none feeble, who may not follow
The children who must go seeking their bread,
She shall be young, she shall be fleet as the swallow,
Nor by the low fire nod an ageing head.
The parting years when the cold shadow lay
Even on the meetings, shall be over and done.
She shall not sit alone at end of day;
Dreaming of days when they were little, alone.

Her arms, they shall be full to overflowing,
The children shall fly home to the kind breast.
There shall be never again the talk of going,
She shall not die alone and dispossessed.
For love-lies-bleeding she shall have hearts-ease,
And Time endure for ever and a day,
The children will fly home by lands and seas,
They will come home to her, come home to stay.

THE RETURN

I RESTED in your easy chair,
  Slept in your late-abandoned bed
And felt your pleasure everywhere,
  A benediction on my head,
Through sleep and waking: all the while
I was quite sure I felt your smile.

I knelt and laid my cheek upon
  The cushions that you lately pressed;
All your familiar things forgone
  Took to my own use and behest,
Quite sure your spirit leant to bless
Your daughter in that loneliness.

I sat beside your fire aglow,
  In the dim hours 'twixt night and day,
And knew you would be glad to know,
  You who gave everything away—
I had your old room, sweet and warm,
Safe from the winter night and storm.

I slept, I rose, I rested there;
  My thoughts, my dreams were still and glad.
The dear room kept its happy air
  As in the golden years we had;
And sleeping, waking, all the while
I was quite sure I felt your smile.

ALICE MEYNELL

Without surcease of breath
Her soul hath slipped its sheath,
  And walks among us, beautiful, unafraid,
So mortal eyes may see
How immortality
  Transcends all beauty that must fail and fade.

Colours of air and flame,
The glory whence she came,
  Yet float about her in our dusty sphere.
Silence and rapture still
Brought from the heavenly hill,
  Whence she hath travelled to our exile drear.

Slight as a lance she is,
And tall as Lent lilies,
  Aspiring like a flame in windless air,
Incense and breath of spice,
Kept from her Paradise,
  Haunt her from slender feet to ebon hair.

Lingering and lovely voice—
Lutes, dulcimers, hautboys—
  Her voice remembers how the music went,
Still holds the rise and fall,
The sob ecstatical,
  Of some most heavenly-sweet wind instrument.

VALE

Now may deep country beckon and ope and
fields of God receive him!
For an old rosy countryman be dewy
meadows spread!
Under the shadow of great hills, by singing
waters leave him.
Be sure he will be well content where flocks
and herds are fed.

Talk not of city gates of pearl—for pity's
sake no cities!
How could he bear the city though its
pavement was of gold?
But bid him take his country walks, with the
birds singing their ditties,
The sheep and lambs all bleating still as
in his fields of old.

Oh, I can see him as of old, blue-eyed, benign
and smiling,
And he would lean upon a gate and count
his herds again.

The pleasant country on his heart had laid
her soft beguiling,
His fields called to him night and day and
never called in vain.

Let him awake of a bright morn to growing
time and mowing.
The songs of reapers reach his ears, the
singing of the scythe.
Give him no stars beneath his feet, but
scented clover showing,
The cocksfoot and the sorrel and the
sainfoin blithe.

Thou Who art Shepherd of the flock; Thy
flock knows no repining!
Give him not mansions ivory-white nor
splendid palaces,
Give him instead the happy fields, the
mountains still and shining,
And let him walk with Thee about Thy
Shepherd's business.

LOVE COMFORTLESS

The child is in the night and rain
On whom no lightest wind might blow,
And out alone in a hurricane.
Ah, no,
The child is safe in Paradise!

The snow is on his gentle head,
His little feet are in the snow,
Oh, very cold is his small bed!
Ah, no,
Lift up your hearts, lift up your eyes!

Over the fields and out of sight,
Beside the lonely river's flow,
Lieth the child this bitter night.
Ah, no,
The child sleeps under Mary's eyes!

What wandering lamb cries sore distressed,
Whilst I with fire and comfort go?
Oh, let me warm him in my breast!
Ah, no,
'Tis warm in God's lit nurseries!

DOREEN

Her curled and rosy beauty
So shining was,
The heart went crying and sighing
That it must pass.

With the gold and the silver
She did adorn her:
The heart went weeping and weeping
That it must mourn her.

Like apple-blossom and clove-pink,
Her white and red;
God when He made her colour
Laughed as He made.

Little gold head of curls
Shining and bright of her;
God when He made her hair
Took delight of her.

Tall as a poplar tree,
Slight as a spear,
Graceful as is a swan
On a still mere.

All so harmless her beauty,
  Innocent, mild,
Like a young lamb in the pasture,
  Like a young child.

With the rose and the scarlet
  She did bedeck her;
Radiant as a new rose
  Fresh from the Maker.

All so dewy, so tender,
  Her beauty was,
The heart dropped tears in the silence
  That it must pass.

THE LOST LAND

What wind is it that stirs,
Lighter than gossamers,
In the pines, in the firs?

The Wind of Youth it blows
From Yesterdays, Long Agos,
Under the rose, the rose.

What song is it he sings?
What news is it he brings
Of old, of belovèd things?

The Wind of Youth is young,
He goes with a careless song,
No years have done him wrong.

The Wind of Youth is sad.
Nay, he is merry and glad,
With the heart of a lad, a lad.

By the Wind of Youth and its word,
Like the song of a fairy bird,
The secret springs are stirred.

O Wind of Youth in the tree,
Go by, nor trouble me
With news of the lost country

That all so heavenly shows
Under the rose, the rose,
Whence none returns, none goes.

THE DEAD CHILD

The little son was dead
  Ere he was born, alas!
Never upon his hapless head
  The saving water was.

In Crios-na-Lanna drear
  They laid the precious clay
That will not rise in any year,
  Nor on the Judgment Day.

As she went to and fro,
  Her tears fell down like rain
For the small son she might not know,
  Whom she had borne in pain.

As she went out about,
  Her tears they burned like fire
For the small wandering soul cast out
  That was Our Lord's desire.

As she went to the well,
  Past Crios-na-Lanna dark,
She heard the sheep and the sheep-bell
  And many a happy lark.

O'er churchyard grave and moss
  The sheep cropped, well content;

The little grave without a cross
Cried to her as she went.

She never raised her eyes,
But drew the water clear.
Is it a new-born babe that cries,
Or straying lambkin near?

Oh, is it lamb or child
That leaves the churchyard sod?
A little lamb all undefiled
And like the Lamb of God;

That seeks its mother mild
With tender soft alarms;
Oh, is it lamb or is it child
That bleats within her arms?

Oh, is it child or lamb
That pushes at her breast?
A lamb that sought its straying dam
And has come home to rest.

On Crios-na-Lanna's rock
The sheep browse safe from harms:
One little lamb has left the flock
And leaped into her arms.

By Crios-na-Lanna lone
At morning-tide and even,
The hungry heart has found its own,
The mother is in Heaven.

THE GHOST

Since you I loved are lost
And all my hopes are vain,
Then come to me, a lonely ghost,
Out of the night and rain.

Oh, come to me a ghost
And sit beside my fire.
I shall not fear you, loved and lost
And still my heart's desire.

Oh, come to me again
When stars are bright and keen,
Oh, come and tap on the window-pane
And I will let you in.

Eagerly will I come
And set the window wide;
And bid you welcome to your home
And to your own fireside.

Oh, come, belovèd ghost,
When stars lean on the hill:
And I will warm you from the frost
And from the night-wind chill.

You shall forget the grave,
And I forget to weep:
Since the old comfort we shall have
To lull us into sleep.

Fear! Is it fear of you,
And on my breast your head?
I shall but fear the dawning new,
And the cocks both white and red.

FOR MY FATHER

Over and over again I dream a dream;
I am coming home to you in the starlit gloam;
Long was the day from you and sweet 'twill seem
The day is over and I am coming home.

Then I shall find you as in days long past,
Sitting so quietly in the firelight glow;
" Love," you will say to me, " you are come at last,"
Your eyes be glad of me as long ago.

All I have won since then will slip my hold,
Dear love and children, the long years away;
I shall come home to you the girl of old,
Glad to come home to you—oh, glad to stay!

Often and often I am dreaming yet
Of the firelit window when I've crossed the hill,
And I coming home to you from night and wet:
Often and often I am dreaming still.

Over and over again I dream my dream.
Ah, why would it haunt me if it wasn't true?
I am travelling home to you by the last red
gleam,
In the quiet evening I am finding you.

THE VOYAGE

Some morning I shall rise from sleep
When all the house is quiet and dark.
I shall steal out and find my ship
By the dim quayside and embark.

Nor fear the seas or any wind,
I have known Fear but now no more;
My ship will bear me safe and kind,
Long hoped for and long waited for.

To no strange country shall I come,
But to mine own delightful land,
With Love to bid me welcome home,
And Love to lead me by the hand.

Love, you and I will cling together
And look long in each other's eyes,
There will be rose and violet weather
Under the trees of Paradise.

We shall not hear the ticking clock
Nor the soft rustle of Time's wings,
Nor dread the sharp, dividing stroke,
Being come now to immortal things.

You of that country shall be fain,
  Being now no new inhabitant,
Its beauties to set forth, explain
  And all its dear delights to vaunt.

They shall not end in a thousand year,
  You, Love and I shall be together,
Withouten any change to fear,
  Glad in the rose and violet weather.

With all those wonders to admire
  And the heart's hunger satisfied,
Fed to the full our heart's desire,
We shall forget we ever died.

Oh, in some morning, dateless yet,
  I shall rise up in the sweet dark,
And find my ship with sails all set
  By the dim quayside and embark.

SAINTS AND ANGELS

OF THE APPLE

The apples in the garden bed
Turned ripe and rosy to the South;
The youngest novice raised her head,
And eyed them with a watering mouth.

She said: "Our Mother Eve wrought woe
Once with the deadly apple's bite:
God keep mine eyes from following so
After my evil appetite."

Down came the Saint, and gathered then
Of all the ripest sweetest one,
Clear amber-cheeked, with ruddy stain,
From the hot kisses of the sun.

She ate, and praised God as she ate,
That He made apples very good.
"He might," she said, "have given the date,
The fig, the orange, for our food;

"Nor yet made apples, to delight
The eye, the smell, the palate fine:
For these my grateful appetite
Praises the Giver kind, divine.

" Sister," she said, " come, pluck and eat,
And thank with me the Lord, Who made
For us such flavours, cool and sweet,
Wherewith the world abounds," she said.

THE HERMIT

Who, counting human joys as vain,
Departeth from the ways of men,
And to the desert takes his road
Rejoicing for the love of God;

Who dieth to the human hive
That he may save his soul alive,
Shakes from his feet the dust of sin,
And with much weeping is made clean;

Him shall the desert sweetly please,
Sweeter than musk or ambergris;
Unto his sands with song and sport
Companion angels shall resort.

The roseate clouds at dawn shall blow
Angels his way, and clouds of snow
Drift angels to the earth and make
Ladders of silver for his sake.

In his palm-tree shall angels stir,
Skilled in the lute and dulcimer,
And with their golden wing-feathers
Shall fan him from the noontide airs.

And by his well shall angels lean
And see the golden heads within;
Their hands the date and fig shall bring
To make his meal at evening.

Him shall no evil beast affright
Since angels guard him day and night;
The vultures they have fled afar
From where God's feathered people are.

Sweet his estate who in the wild,
No more mere mortal man exiled,
Looks up, from his tear-watered sod,
And sees in Heaven the smile of God.

IN IONA

Oh, 'tis pleasant in Iona
  Whether in shine or snow!
Grand it is in Iona
  When the north winds blow.
The birds sing sweet in Iona,
  Oh, very sweet and low!
But sore I miss in Iona
  A voice I used to know.

Iona hath the song-birds,
  And the hum of the bees,
The distant bark of house-dogs,
  And the wind in the trees.
She hath the singing cricket,
  And the moan of the seas,
But never the low of cattle
  My homesick heart to ease.

The wee black cow of Kerry
  Is docile and kind;
The big-framed cow of Leinster
  Is much to my mind;

The wild little cow of the mountains,
Who shall loose or bind?
Sweet is the call of the milkmaid
Borne upon the wind.

Columba, he has said it:
" Wherever a cow shall be,
There shall be found a woman,
Her wiles and witchery.
And in this Holy Island,
May God forbid that she
Should plague with sore temptation
My holy men and me."

And since the kine are banished,
Heavy my heart doth go.
Oh, sweet it is in Iona
Whatever wind will blow.
But I, the farmer brother,
My tears are sad and slow
For the low of the kindly cattle,
The voice I used to know.

MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Not woman-faced and sweet, as look
The angels in the picture-book;
But terrible in majesty,
More than an army passing by.

His hair floats not upon the wind
Like theirs, but curled and closely twined;
Wrought with his aureole, so that none
Shall know the gold curls from the crown.

His wings he hath put away in steel,
He goes mail-clad from head to heel;
Never moon-silver hath outshone
His breast-plate or his morion.

His brows are like a battlement,
Beautiful, brave, and innocent;
His eyes with fires of battle burn—
On his strong mouth the smile is stern.

His horse, the horse of Heaven, goes forth,
Bearing him to the South and North,
Neighing far off, as one that sees
The battle over distances.

His fiery sword is never at rest,
His foot is in the stirrup prest;
Through all the world where wrong is done
Michael the Soldier rideth on.

Michael, Commander! Angels are
That sound the trumpet, and that bear
The banners by the Throne, where is
The King one nameth on one's knees.

Angels there are of peace and prayers,
And them that go with wayfarers,
And them that watch the house of birth,
And them that bring the dead from earth,

And mine own Angel. Yet I see,
Heading God's army gloriously,
Michael Archangel, like a sun,
Splendid beyond comparison!

THE ASS OF HEAVEN

If I was like St. Francis,
As no such thing am I,
I'd give to folk of Heaven
A name to call me by,
The Ass of Christ, my master
In lands beyond the sky.

If I could bear as meekly
Stumbling uphill my load,
As he, my four-foot brother,
Inured to curse and rod,
'Twould not so ill beseem me
To be the Ass of God.

If I could stand so patient,
In scourging wind and rain,
And bear so uncomplaining
The bitter ways of men;
To be the Ass of Heaven
Would be my glory then.

But, I, so cold, so froward,
So fain of my own will,
Hating the load I carry,
Aware of every hill!
Make me like this small brother,
Kind and forgiving still!

If like this honest brother
I bore the blame and shame,
The Cross between my shoulders
To show Whose ass I am,
The folk of Heaven might hail me
The Ass of Christ by name.

ST. FRANCIS TO THE BIRDS

Little sisters, the birds:
We must praise God, you and I—
You, with songs that fill the sky,
I, with halting words.

All things tell His praise,
Woods and waters thereof sing,
Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring,
And the nights and days.

Yea, and cold and heat,
And the sun and stars and moon,
Sea with her monotonous tune,
Rain and hail and sleet.

And the winds of heaven,
And the solemn hills of blue,
And the brown earth and the dew,
And the thunder even.

And the flowers' sweet breath.
All things make one glorious voice;
Life with fleeting pains and joys,
And our Sister, Death.

Little flowers of air,
With your feathers soft and sleek,
And your brightest eyes and meek,
He hath made you fair.

He hath taught to you
Skill to weave in tree and thatch
Nests where happy mothers hatch
Speckled eggs of blue.

And hath children given.
When the soft heads overbrim
The brown nests, then thank ye Him
In the clouds of heaven.

Also in your lives
Live His laws Who loveth you.
Husbands, be ye kind and true;
Be home-keeping, wives—

Love not gossiping;
Stay at home and keep the nest;
Fly not here and there in quest
Of the newest thing.

Live as brethren live:
Love be in each heart and mouth;
Be not envious, be not wroth,
Be not slow to give.

When ye build the nest,
Quarrel not o'er straw or wool;
He, He hath been bountiful
To the neediest.

Be not puffed nor vain
Of your beauty or your worth,
Of your children or your birth,
Or the praise you gain.

Eat not greedily:
Sometimes, for sweet mercy's sake,
Worm or insect spare to take;
Let it crawl or fly.

See ye sing not near
To our church on holy day,
Lest the human-folk should stray
From their prayers to hear.

Now depart in peace:
In God's name I bless each one;
May your days be long i' the sun
And your joys increase.

And remember me,
Poor Brother Francis, who
Loves you, and gives thanks to you
For this courtesy.

Sometimes when ye sing,
Name my name, that He may take
Pity for the dear song's sake
On my shortcoming.

LAVENDER

There's a clump of lavender
In the convent garden old,
Alive with the pilferer
Who wears a coat of gold.

He swings and he sways
As he sucks his sweet.
All through a honeyed haze
His wings cling and his feet.

By the grey-blue lavender
Fra Placid comes and goes—
Sets on the grass-plot there
His linen all in rows.

The Lord God's altar-cloth
Whereon is laid white bread
For starving souls and both
The white wine and the red.

The marble Mother and Child
Look down from a green space;
Holy and undefiled,
They give the garden grace.

There, when the dews began
And the suns ripened the peach,
Fra Placid, sacristan,
Laid his fair cloths to bleach.

In the fresh morning time,
May Christ all souls assoil!
The bell ringing for Prime
Summoned him to new toil.

For hours he dusted and swept,
Yea, he had little ease,
At the noontide he slept,
His head drooped to his knees.

About the vesper hour
He woke and slept again,
Forgetting the sudden shower,
The thieving, wandering men.

Until, wide-waked at last,
The linen came to mind;
He ran with anxious haste,
Fearing no cloths to find.

There by the lavender
He spied a wondrous sight;
The pedestal was bare,
Queen Mary walked in white.

She walked with a still air
Over the shining grass;
The spikes of lavender
Bent low as she did pass.

No more in her embrace
She clasped her sweetest Son.
He leapt on the grassy space
As a lamb might leap and run.

He skipped like a white lamb
Upon the daisied sod,
Played many a merry game,
The little Lamb of God.

He gathered with delight
The lavender, leaf and flower,
And on the linen white
He shook it in a shower.

Placid, the sacristan,
Fell on his face afraid.
Tears down his old cheeks ran—
Dear God, dear God! he said.

Dear God, dear God! he wept;
See how thy table-cloth
Was well guarded and kept
While I gave way to sloth.

The bell called him to prayer,
He went obediently:
'Twere well that all my care
Had such sweet strewings, said he.

PRAYERS AND DESIRES

SHE ASKS FOR NEW EARTH

Lord, when I find at last Thy Paradise,
Be it not all too bright for human eyes,
Lest I go sick for home through the high mirth—
For Thy new Heaven, Lord, give me new earth.

Give of Thy mansions, Lord, a house so small
Where they can come to me who were my all;
Let them run home to me just as of yore,
Glad to sit down with me and go out no more.

Give me a garden, Lord, and a low hill,
A field and a babbling brook that is not still;
Give me an orchard, Lord, in leaf and bloom,
And my birds to sing to me in a quiet gloam.

There shall no canker be in leaf and bud,
But glory on hill and sea and the green-wood,
There, there shall none grow old but all be new,
No moth nor rust shall fret nor thief break through.

Set Thou a mist upon Thy glorious sun,
Lest we should faint for night and be undone;
Give us the high clean wind and the wild rain,
Lest that we faint with thirst and go in pain.

Let there be Winter there and the joy of
Spring,
Summer and Autumn and the harvesting;
Give us all things we loved on earth of old
Never to slip from out our fond arms' fold.

Give me a little house for my desire,
The man and the children to sit by my fire,
And friends crowding in to us, to our lit
hearth—
For Thy new Heaven, Lord, give me new
earth!

LUX IN TENEBRIS

At night what things will stalk abroad,
  What veilèd shapes, and eyes of dread!
With phantoms in a lonely road
  And visions of the dead.

The kindly room when day is here,
  At night takes ghostly terrors on;
And every shadow hath its fear,
  And every wind its moan.

Lord Jesus, Day-Star of the world,
  Rise Thou, and bid this dark depart,
And all the east, a rose uncurled,
  Grow golden at the heart!

Lord, in the watches of the night,
  Keep Thou my soul! a trembling thing
As any moth that in daylight
  Will spread a rainbow wing.

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

I WOULD choose to be a door-keeper
In the House of the Lord
Rather than lords and ladies
In satin on the sward.
To draw the bolts for the white souls
Would be my rich reward:
And I the happy door-keeper
In the House of the Lord.

Of all troop in not one goes out
From the House of the Lord,
Those who have won from sin and death,
From age and grief abhorred.
There is more room within its courts
Than palaces afford;
So great it is and spacious
In the House of the Lord.

They come with shining faces
To the House of the Lord;
The broken hearts and weary
That life has racked and scored:

They come hurrying and singing
To sit down at His board;
They are young and they are joyful
In the House of the Lord.

There are lilies and daisies
In the House of the Lord.
The lover meets his lover
With a long, long regard.
The mothers find the children,
Strayed from their watch and ward.
Oh, the meetings and the greetings
In the House of the Lord!

I would be a humble door-keeper
In the House of the Lord,
Where the courts are white and shining
In the Light of the Word.
When the saved souls come trooping
For the gates to be unbarred,
Oh, blessed is the door-keeper
In the House of the Lord!

WHEN A LITTLE FARM I KEEP

When a little farm I keep,
I shall tend my kine and sheep,
And my pretty lambs shall fold
In deep pastures starred with gold.

On green carpets they shall tread,
Gold and purple be their bed,
Honey clover make their food
In a watered solitude.

Garden places I shall tend,
For a welcome to a friend,
Make for him a roomy seat
By the box and privet sweet.

And my kitchen garden shall
Grow me fruits on tree and wall,
Give me blossoms in the spring
And an autumn gathering.

An old dial and a cote
Where the pigeons fly and float,

And a well so green and dim
Where the little fishes swim.

Hives of honey I shall own,
Bees with drowsy monotone
Toil all day to bring me home
Heather honey at the gloam.

Twixt the mountains and the sea
There my little farm will be.
In a heart-remembered spot
I shall have my happy lot.

In a heart-remembered place,
Where the mountains lift their face,
I shall tend my sheep and kine,
And a thankful heart be mine.

When a little farm I keep,
I shall sleep the happiest sleep,
To my simple meals invite
Thanksgiving and appetite.

In the heart-remembered place
I shall wear a shining face,
And my quiet nights be praise,
And a prayer my innocent days.

SHE ASKS FOR A HOUSE

Joseph, send me a house,
For the dear sake of Nazareth,
Where the Child in the breast of your spouse
Drew quiet and radiant breath.

Where as you went to and fro
Between the bench and the door,
The little Son's feet, soft and slow,
Made prints on the dusty floor.

Joseph, send, of your grace,
A wee little house for my ease,
In a green and sheltered place,
With a hive for the honey-bees.

The sound of the cattle a-browse,
The song of the lark and the linnet,
The flowers to cover the house,
And the peace of God to be in it.

Send me a warm hearth-stone,
And the things that I love about me.
A wee little house of my own,
And none to trouble or flout me.

And there, as I sit by the fire,
  Remembering all that is past,
I shall make to my heart's desire
  A wee little song to the last.

The praise of the Child shall be in it,
  The thought of Mary, your spouse,
And, Joseph, listen a minute;
  Your name, if you give me the house.

Joseph, lean now and hear,
  The roads of the world are stark,
Lonesome and strange things to fear;
  Cover my head from the dark!

Safe out of the rain and wind,
  I shall be glad, though I'm old,
Singing a song of you, Kind,—
  Who gave me a house from the cold.

THE CHURCH PORCH

The sparrows underneath Thine eaves
  Flutter and chatter, making merry
As in the cool shade of dark leaves.

Thy still House in the dusty town
  Is a green wood, a sanctuary
For to come in and to sit down.

Such shade, such ease, deep water-wells;
  Just to sit down with Thee like Mary,
And to forget all else, all else!

And yet I dare not draw so nigh,
  Though to Thy guests Thou art not chary:
Thine angels, sure, would wonder why!

Give me the lowest place, even theirs,
  Thy sooty sparrows, cool and airy,
Chattering Thy name to the blue airs.

Where Thou goest in and out and might
  Not find too thin and customary
One little pipe for Thy delight.

THE DESIRE

Give me no mansions ivory white,
Nor palaces of pearl and gold;
Give me a child for all delight,
Just four years old.

Give me no wings of rosy shine,
Nor silken raiment, fold on fold;
Give me a little boy all mine,
Just four years old.

Give me no gold and starry crown,
Nor harps, nor palm-branches unrolled;
Give me a nestling head of brown,
Just four years old.

Give me a cheek that's like the peach,
Two arms to clasp me from the cold;
And all my heaven's within my reach,
Just four years old.

Dear God, You give me from Your skies
A little heaven, all mine, to hold,
As Mary once her Paradise,
Just four years old.

A PRAYER FOR LIGHT

Give me the country light, O Lord,
From country skies without a stain,
Not this grey London sky abhorred,
So that my darkness be made plain.

Light softened through the pale green silk
Of leaves that weave my roof above,
Oh, my lost land of honey and milk,
And I to see the light thereof!

There was no haze on the sweet skies,
But clear as water, cool as dew,
Fresh as the fields of Paradise,
With green to let the soft light through.

If I be blind, O Lord, have ruth!
Give me green pastures flecked with shade,
Sweet airs blown from the Land o' Youth,
Where I was little, where I played.

Though I be blind, give me Thy light,
Clear light in leaf-hung country ways,
So shall I sing and so shall write,
And make my Blindman's Holidays.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

SHEEP AND LAMBS

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad;
The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road.

The sheep with their little lambs
Passed me by on the road;
All in an April evening,
I thought on the Lamb of God.

The lambs were weary, and crying
With a weak, human cry.
I thought on the Lamb of God
Going meekly to die.

Up in the blue, blue mountains
Dewy pastures are sweet;
Rest for the little bodies,
Rest for the little feet.

But for the Lamb of God
Up on the hill-top green,
Only a Cross of shame,
Two stark crosses between.

All in the April evening,
April airs were abroad;
I saw the sheep with their lambs,
And thought on the Lamb of God.

SINGING STARS

" What sawest thou, Orion, thou hunter of
the star-lands,
On that night star-sown and azure when thou
cam'st in splendour sweeping,
And amid thy starry brethren from the near
lands and the far lands,
All the night above a stable on the earth thy
watch wert keeping? "

" Oh, I saw the stable surely, and the young
Child and the Mother,
And the placid beasts still gazing with their
mild eyes full of loving;
And I saw the trembling radiance of the
Star, my lordliest brother,
Light the earth and all the heavens as he
kept his guard unmoving.

" There were kings that came from East-
ward with their ivory, spice, and sendal,
With gold fillets in their dark hair, and gold-
broidered robes and stately;

And the shepherds, gazing starward, over
yonder hill did wend all,
And the silly sheep went meekly, and the
wise dog marvelled greatly.

" Oh, we knew, we stars, the stable held our
King, His glory shaded,
That His baby hands were poising all the
spheres and constellations;
Berenice shook her hair down, like a shower
of star-dust braided,
And Arcturus, pale as silver, bent his brows
in adorations.

" The stars sang all together, sang their
love-songs with the angels,
With the Cherubim and Seraphim their
shrilly trumpets blended.
They have never sung together since that
night of great evangels,
And the young Child in the manger, and the
time of bondage ended."

THE CHILDREN OF HEAVEN

The night it was jewelled
That gave Him birth,
With the flight of small angels
'Twixt heaven and earth.

They were babies rosy,
Their heads soft-curled,
They came seeking, small roses,
The Rose of the World.

Like a shower of starshine
Or broken suns,
They were rising and falling
In millions.

When they came to the stable
Soft was their flight,
Some Rose Tree in Heaven
Shook down red and white.

Soft as snows falling,
They settled down,
Clad the poor stable
In a rosy gown;

Clad the poor stable
In gold and silk;
Their wings and their shoulders
Were white as milk.

They peeped at the windows,
Perched on the wall,
Like birds in the autumn
When the Southlands call.

And who are these drifting
As soft as snows,
For little Christ Jesus
His playfellows?

They are hiding and peeping,
Rosy and pale,
From the stable's shadows
And His Mother's veil.

They are pushing and pressing
By the window-sill;
Between their wing-feathers
They look their fill.

There's rustling, and stealing
Of feet and wings.
Perched on the manger
One softly sings.

Come nearer, children,
And see Him lie
On the knees of His Mother
So quietly!

Come, all ye children,
Nor fear the while
The frown of His Mother;
Nay,—see her smile!

The flight of child-angels
When He was born,
Made the morn of Christmas
A rosy morn.

SPONSA DEI

The Lamb of God! Yea, Mary, and thy Lamb!
Ran with thee as the lamb beside his dam;
He leaped, He played, fed full, He grew and throve
In milky fields and pastures of thy love:
His little feet the cowslips washed with gold,
The dews, the winds were tender: heat and cold
Softened for Him who bade them be, Earth smiled.
The sun, the stars, loved Him, the growing child.

When thou didst lean above His cot at night
To listen for His breathing, soft and light,
Two other eyes grew soft in love and joy,
Marked how he throve and doated on the Boy:
The Eyes for which Archangels veil the face,
The unsleeping Lamps of Heaven, in that mild space;

The Eyes of God, the Father, smiled upon
The dewy slumber of the little Son.

When He was sick and all thy lullabies
Could bring no assuagement to His aching
eyes—
(But did He ail as other children do?)
Was there not One who shared thy watch
and knew
The pangs of parenthood and its great fears?
Was He who turns the planets and the
spheres
Fearful and troubled, all His joy undone,
For a sick Child, His own and Mary's Son?

EPIPHANY

The Kings have brought Him ambergris,
The Babe, whose one delight it is,
To creep and nest
In the warm snows of Mother's breast.

The Kings have brought Him frankincense,
Who hath no need, this Innocence,
Of aught beside
His Mother's milk in a full tide.

O'er Mother's breast His fingers go,
Constraining that sweet stream to flow,
So soft and small,
To whom that milky world is all.

The Kings have brought Him gold and myrrh,
This New-born Thing whose Heaven's in her;
To make His bed
In the sweet place from which He fed.

Myrrh, spikenard, such precious things
The Kings have brought the King of Kings,
Who, dronken-deep,
Falls like a full-fed lamb, asleep.

THE WEEPING BABE

She kneels by the cradle
Where Jesus doth lie;
Singing, Lullaby, my Baby!
But why dost Thou cry?

The babes of the village
Smile sweetly in sleep;
And lullaby, my Baby,
That ever dost weep!

I've wrapped Thee in linen,
The gift of the Kings;
And wool, soft and fleecy,
The kind Shepherd brings.

There's a dove on the trellis,
And wings in the door,
And the gold shoes of angels
Are bright on our floor.

Then lullaby, my Baby!
I've fed Thee with milk,
And wrapped Thee in kisses
As soft as the silk.

And here are red roses,
And grapes from the vine,
And a lamb trotting softly,
Thy playfellow fine.

Now smile, little Jesus,
Whom naught can defile;
All gifts will I give Thee
An Thou wilt but smile.

But it's lullaby, my Baby!
And mournful am I,
Thou cherished little Jesus,
That still Thou wilt cry.

THE ASS SPEAKS

I AM the little ass of Christ,
I carried Him ere He was born,
And bore Him to His bitter Tryst
Unwilling, that Palm Sunday morn.

I was His Mother's servant, I,
I carried her from Nazareth,
Up to the shining hill-country,
To see the Lady Elizabeth.

The stones were many in my road,
By valleys steeper than a cup,
I, trembling for my heavenly Load,
Went cat-foot since I held It up.

To me the wonderful charge was given,
I, even the little ass, did go,
Bearing the very weight of Heaven;
So I crept cat-foot, sure and slow.

Again that night when He was born,
I carried my dear burdens twain,
And heard dull people's insolent scorn
Bidding Them to the night and rain.

I knelt beside my Brother Ox,
And saw the very Birth! Oh, Love!
And awe and wonder! Little folks
May see such sights nor die thereof.

The chilly Babe we breathed upon,
Warmed with our breath the frozen air,
Kneeling beside Our Lady's gown,
His only comfort, saving her.

I am beaten, weary-foot, ill-fed;
Men curse me: yet I bear withal
Christ's Cross betwixt my shoulders laid.
So I am honoured, though I'm small.

I served Christ Jesus and I bear
His Cross upon my rough grey back.
Dear Christian people, pray you, spare
The whip, for Jesus Christ His sake.

MATER DEI

She looked to east, she looked to west,
  Her eyes, unfathomable, mild,
That saw both worlds, came home to rest,—
  Home to her own sweet child:
God's golden head was at her breast.

What need to look o'er land and sea?
  What could the winged ships bring to her?
What gold or gems of price might be,
  Ivory or miniver,
Since God Himself lay on her knee?

What could th' intense blue heaven keep
  To draw her eyes and thoughts so high?
All heaven was where her Boy did leap,
  Where her foot quietly
Went rocking the dear God asleep.

The angel folk fared up and down
  A Jacob's Ladder hung between
Her quiet chamber and God's Town.
  She saw unawed, serene;
Since God Himself played by her gown.

THE ONLY CHILD

Lest he miss other children, lo!
His angel is his playfellow,
A riotous angel two years old,
With wings of rose and curls of gold.

There on the nursery floor together
They play when it is rainy weather,
Building brick castles with much pain,
Only to knock them down again.

Two golden heads together look
An hour long o'er a picture-book,
Or, tired of being good and still,
They play at horses with good will.

And when the boy laughs you shall hear
Another laughter silver-clear,
Sweeter than music of the skies,
Or harps, or birds of Paradise.

Two golden heads one pillow press,
Two rosebuds shut for heaviness,
The wings of one are round the other
Lest chill befall his tender brother.

All day, with forethought mild and grave,
The little angel's quick to save,
And still outruns with tender haste
The adventurous feet that go too fast.

From draughts, from fire, from cold and
stings,
Wraps him within his gauzy wings;
And knows his father's pride, and shares
His happy mother's tears and prayers.

IN LENT

Now with the lengthening days
To God give glory and praise,
  Because He spills His plenty on the earth.
That Life stirs bold and brave
Prisoned in tree and grave,
  And earth is quick, is quick with myriad birth.

O now the thrushes sing,
The heart has gotten a wing,
  And all's given back again, nothing is lost.
They who were dead have come
New from the teeming womb,
  Coming with banners, a gay and glistening host.

Now is fast before feast,
Sober the year goes drest,
  This is the Lenten time to fast and pray;
But listen and you shall hear
The multitudinous cheer
  Rise up, sent forth, of the dead under the clay.

The Lord of Life shall rise
New from the sacrifice,
  And all Creation follow, a glistening train
Singing innumerable,
With wonderful news to tell,
  How Christ is risen, is risen, and Death is
    slain.

THE SLEEP

God thought of sleep, so that He might
Cradle His Man in the cool night
With more than mother's love, and hold
Warm to His breast the child of old.

Poor Man, that is so proud and high,
Yet he must fall asleep and lie
Open to all the winds and harms,
Unless God rocks him in His arms.

Poor Man, though all besmirched, shall keep
Yet the last innocence of sleep,
And like a child must lie alone,
Defenceless, harmless, overthrown.

God's gentleness with sinners see!
In sleep they will not disagree
Nor hurt as only lovers can;
They are at one, God and His Man.

Tenderly night shall find him, held
To a kind breast, who late rebelled;

New-reconciled with kisses he
Shall slumber on a mighty knee.

Man's but a toddling child, stripped bare
Of all the countless years that were;
Little and low: God's art to keep
A youngling thing in His arms asleep.

THE COMPANIONSHIP

God goes with me everywhere I go,
So the joy of Him is never far,
Like the Spring's breath o'er a waste of snow,
Like in blackest night the clearest star.

Oh, the thought of Him's a water-spring
In a parched land cracked with dusty heat;
Like green pastures where the dear birds sing;
There my Shepherd guides my stumbling feet.

Oh, my God is dew in the starved day,
Manna to the hungry soul and sick.
God goes with me on the difficult way,
And the thorn's a-flower, the dead is quick.

Still His hands reach out lest I should slip,
Still His voice speaks comfort to my ear.
In our close, our dear companionship
There's but room for love and none for fear.

Oh, my God forgets not: He is kind;
He comes closer when the way is rough;
Shelters me against the bitter wind.
Oh, my God is Love, and love's enough.

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday is a heavenly day,
So bright, so fair, so still.
They slay the King of all the world
On a high hill.

The birds sing sweet and low,
With a most quiet mirth.
They scoop a hollow grave for Him,
The holiest head on earth.

Good Friday is a heavenly day,
New lights on earth and sky;
The day the Saviour of us all
Went forth to die.

Sweetly it rose and fell,
So calm, so light, so grave.
Christ Jesus, sacrificed for men,
Died—and forgave.

THE GARDEN

Our Lord, Christ Jesus, Son of God,
Loved gardens while on earth He abode.

There was a garden where He took
His pleasures oft, by Kedron's brook.
There in his uttermost agony
He found a pillow whereon to lie
And anguish while His disciples slept.
Be sure the little grass-blades kept
Vigil with Him, and the grey olives
Shivered and sighed like one that grieves,
And the flowers hid their eyes for fear!
His garden was His comforter.
There to the quiet heart He made,
He came, and it upheld His head
Before the angel did. Therefore
Blessed be gardens evermore!

Christ Jesus in the sad world's dearth
Lay three days in the lap of earth.
And while He lay, stabbed through, one
wound,
The garden waited tear-bedrowned,

Quiet from sunrise to sunrise.
The widowed flowers had veiled their eyes;
Nor Canterbury bells did ring;
Nor rose lift her burnt-offering;
Nor primroses nor violets,
Nor sops-in-wine nor mignonettes,
But thought upon the thorns and spears
And on the blessed Mary's tears.
All in a Truce of God,—a peace,—
The garden rocked Him on her knees.

But oh! in the beautiful rose-red day
Who comes a-walking down this way?
Why's Magdalen weeping? Ah, sweet lady,
She knows not where is her Lord's Body!
Sweet Magdalen, see! here is your Love!
Whom Solomon's-seal and the sweet-clove
Brush with their lips as He goes by;
And love-lies-bleeding and rosemary.
Now bid His disciples haste! Bring hither
His Mother and St. John together!
But 'twas the Garden saw Him rise.
Wherefore she flaunts her peacock eyes;
Wherefore her birds sing low and loud.
The heart that bore His sleep is proud.

Because the garden was His friend
Blessed be gardens world without end.
Amen.

THE GREY COUNTRY

I DREAMT a dream on November Night
Of the dear souls that wait in pain
For the full Vision, the Delight,
Beauty that shall not change nor wane.

The grey country's to Heaven close,
Not Heaven but almost Heaven's twin;
As a grey rose to a gold rose,
As a grey image faint and thin.

In the grey land were bliss enough
Did not the Vision shine and gleam,
Turning the softest way to rough
Until they might attain to Him.

Mary walking in Heaven's bower
Heard the sighing after her Son:
Give me Thy Mercy for an hour,
Thou who wert once my little one!

Mary came with stars in her hair,
The new moon was under her feet;
In the grey world so still and fair
The heart of the world began to beat.

Some were clinging beside her skirt,
Soul on soul like a flock of birds;
Others nested, oh, past desert!
On the heart that had seven swords.

Mary gathers them one and all,
Many a one late home from war,
As they were children tender and small—
Sweetly gathers them all to her.

As a green tree in the birds' flight
I saw Mary amid her flock,
Carrying souls in her veil white,
Hiding them warm in her blue cloak.

LAMBS

He sleeps as a lamb sleeps,
  Beside his mother.
Somewhere in yon blue deeps
  His tender brother
Sleeps like a lamb and leaps.

He feeds as a lamb might,
  Beside his mother.
Somewhere in fields of light
  A lamb, his brother,
Feeds, and is clothed in white.

LONELINESS

He who had all else Heaven and earth
Could give Him, till His human Birth
He had no mother though He had
His Father's love, secure and glad;
Yet He made mothers for delight
Of the small babes in the cold night.

He saw how well His hand had made
Her bosom for the baby's head,
How tender are her arms to fold
The shivering thing in a soft hold,
And how her voice goes hush-a-loo,
Rocking the cradle to and fro.

He has had all these for content.
For three-and-thirty years has leant
On a fond heart that fails Him not.
He is in the fiery chariot:
The clouds have ta'en Him and the wind.
But His sweet Mother's left behind!

What's wrong with Heaven? His Father's
there,
The brooding Dove's aloft in air,
Heaven's as it was, serene, unflawed.
For the first time the Heart of God,
Lately made Man, hath little ease,
For loneliness, for loneliness.

LOVE IN HEAVEN

The child is rocked on Mary's knees,
Her lullaby stills his alarms,
Love's cradle gives him happy ease,
Love's nest of love within her arms:
" Lullaby," she singeth, " pretty babe of sorrow,
Thy mother comes to stay with thee to-morrow."

One angel holds his basin, one
His ewer of golden water sweet,
And one his robe to put him on,
And one his pillow and his sheet.
" Oh, mystery", they cry, "of love and sorrow,
Sleep sweet, dear babe, thy mother comes to-morrow."

Immortal angels standing by
Kiss that sweet babe on Mary's knee.
" Blessed the woman is," they sigh,
" Whose motherhood hath given her Thee.
Happy her lot in mortal joy and sorrow
Who lost thee yesterday but finds to-morrow."

THE FULFILMENT

Who are these that go with our girl white as snow,
The one speckless lily since the world began?
They carry the well-water for our little dear daughter,
Their wings are as sapphire, my good wife Anne.

Joachim, my husband, there is naught amiss,
Though something's changed our girl from the child she was,
When from the hidden Temple she came, gentle and simple—
Surely some wonderful thing of God has come to pass!

Anne, in the dawning when the lights were low
And the first bird was stirring I was sore afeard.
There was someone with our girl, clad in the rose and pearl,
For I heard his talking and her answer heard.

When she plucks the grapes from the clinging vine,
When she sweeps the hearth-place and kneads the bread,
There's a hand fine and slender, quick aid to render.
What light grows about her, our little maid?

Anne, in the house there's a stirring of feet,
Winnowing of wings and rustle upon the stair.
The flowers spring before her and the stars lean o'er her,
And the ring of light dazzles gold in her hair.

Joachim, my goodman, great things are afoot,
The Hour of God is striking and the Word fulfilled.
The child that shall be born shall wear the Crown of Thorn.
Yea, for world's healing His Blood be spilled.

Mary goes by them, slender and young.
The Rose of Sharon's budded and Jesse's Rod's in flower,
Magnificat she is singing and her song soaring, winging,
Sets all the roses swinging in Heaven's bower.

HERSELF

She hath it in her keeping, the house quietly sleeping—
When all the world is fast asleep she's keeping guard;
Her hands stretched in blessing have Heaven for possessing.
She and her Baby hold the house in watch and ward.

Withouten fear and harm the folk sleep and lie warm,
Since there are Two that watch the house the whole night long;
Against fire and danger and the storm's wild anger,
The pestilence that flies by night, Herself is strong.

Her Son she is holding like a flower unfolding
'Twixt the sleepers and the evil that walks abroad;

She draws a line round them and her light to bound them
Under the shelter of her hands and the eyes of God.

The children quietly dreaming of woods and waters gleaming
Wander all night in Paradise amid the flowers;
And wake up still smiling for the dream's beguiling
To her leading and tending through the daylight hours.

There is love and no chiding in the house of her abiding;
There's a light that glows, none knoweth whence, in the air serene.
She who is Queen and Lady of her Son and Heaven already,
Herself is Lady of the House, its Mother and Queen.

AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG

I saw three ships a-sailing,
A-sailing on the sea.
The first her masts were silver,
Her hull was ivory.
The snows came drifting softly,
And lined her white as wool;
O Jesus, Son of Mary,
Thy Cradle beautiful!

I saw three ships a-sailing.
The next was red as blood,
Her decks shone like a ruby,
Encrimsoned all her wood.
Her main-mast stood up lonely,
A lonely Cross and stark.
O Jesus, Son of Mary,
Bring all men to that ark!

I saw three ships a-sailing.
The third for cargo bore
The souls of men redeemèd,
That shall be slaves no more.

The lost belovèd faces,
I saw them glad and free.
O Jesus, Son of Mary,
When wilt Thou come for me?

A SONG OF ST. ANNE

Our Lady in cold stable lay,
The Babe was pinched with cold:
St. Anne of Auray's clad like May
In the green silk and the gold.

Her cloak is set with glittering gem,
And sewn with pearls a-thread;
Too heavy her crusted diadem,
For one old Granny's head.

The priests they sing; the banners gleam,
The music swells and dies;
But she has gotten a golden dream
Behind her painted eyes.

As she goes up, and she goes down,
Within her dream she sees
Lord Jesus in a swaddling gown
Upon Our Lady's knees.

They fling her many a bough and bloom
And roses for her floor;
But she is seeing a hidden room,
And the sun in at the door.

The vines shake on the trellises
And the shadows on the wall;
The dove bidding a golden peace
To her girl, slender and tall.

The dreaming turns and shifts mayhap,
And oh, the dream is blest!
A Child creeps to His Granny's lap;
His head lies on her breast.

She sings a sleepy song and low,
Such songs as women use
Rocking the small Thing to and fro,
In the dusk hour and the dews.

St. Anne of Auray blesses the ships,
She blesses the sea and land:
She feels the touch of a young child's lips
And the rose-leaf of his hand.

THE VISION OF JESUS

" Sweetest Son, what dost Thou see?
In Thine eyes groweth the shadow.
Dost Thou weary of earth and me
While we wander in this sweet meadow?

" Flowers are springing all gold before
My little Son, who shall be my Man;
Meadow grasses bow to adore
The sweetest flower since the world began.

" Little Jesus that turnest from me,
What dost Thou grieve for, sad and apart!
Thine eyes see something I cannot see;
Why art Thou mournful, little dear heart?"

" Mother of mine, I look on a place
And men asleep 'neath a darkling sky;
One crieth out with a stricken face.
O, Mother, I fear that man is I!"

" Thou dream'st, small Son! Is naught to fear.
Sit and play 'neath the blooming bough.
Here be Thine angels, merry and dear.
Thy Father will send Thee guards enow."

" But, Mother, I see a rabble rout,
And one among them is dragged to die.
' *Crucifige!*' the voices shout.
O, Mother, I fear that man is I!"

" Peace, dear Lordkin; here be Thy birds,
The kid, Thy sweeting, the lamb, the dove;
Thy Father will send Thee a million swords
Ere any harm Thee, my Baby Love."

" O, Mother, I see a man of grief
Nailed to the cross on a hill-top high;
His head is bowed betwixt thief and thief—
O, Mother, I think that man is I!"

" Peace, little Birdkin; they dare not do it;
Here runs little John to play with Thee.
Rose of Sharon and Jesse's Root,
I, Thy Mother, will stay with Thee."

She kisses her Rose, His hands, His feet,
" It was but dreaming, my Son so small."
But over her heart, in the noontide heat,
The shadows of three gaunt crosses fall.

IN WAR-TIME

HERBAL

Love-Lies-Bleeding now is found
Grown in every common ground.
Love-lies-bleeding thrives apace
With the dear forget-me-not
Now in any garden plot.

Love-in-a-mist, bewilderèd
With the many tears Love shed,
Seeks for herb-o'-grace to bind
Up her wounds, and fever-few
To give ease to a hurt mind;
Wound-wort is not wanting too.

Now the love-lies-bleeding grows
More than lily or the rose;
Love-in-idleness has gone
Out of fashion; here are flowers—
Heartsease for to rest upon
With remembrance of sweet hours.

Ladders-to-heaven may be found
Now in any common ground.

INDIAN SUMMER
(1914)

This is the sign!

This flooding splendour, golden and hyaline,
This sun a golden sea on hill and plain—
That God forgets not, that He walks with men.
His smile is on the mountain and the pool
And all the fairy lakes are beautiful.

This is the word!

That makes a thing of flame the water-bird.
This mercy of His fulfilled in the magical
Clear glow of skies from dawn to evenfall,
Telling His Hand is over us, that we
Are not delivered to the insatiable sea.

This is the pledge!

The promise writ in gold to the water's edge:
His bow's in Heaven and the great floods are over.
O broken hearts, lift up! The Immortal Lover
Embraces, comforts with the enlivening sun,
The sun He bids stand still till the day is won.

FLOWER OF YOUTH

Lest Heaven be thronged with grey-beards hoary,
God, who made boys for His delight,
Stoops in a day of grief and glory
And calls them in, in from the night.
When they come trooping from the war
Our skies have many a young new star.

Heaven's thronged with gay and careless faces,
New-waked from dreams of dreadful things,
They walk in green and pleasant places
And by the crystal water-springs,
Who dreamt of dying and the slain,
And the fierce thirst and the strong pain.

Dear boys! They shall be young for ever.
The Son of God was once a boy.
They run and leap by a clear river
And of their youth they have great joy.
God who made boys so clean and good
Smiles with the eyes of fatherhood.

Now Heaven is by the young invaded;
Their laughter's in the House of God.
Stainless and simple as He made it,
God keeps the heart o' the boy unflawed.
The old wise Saints look on and smile,
They are so young and without guile.

Oh, if the sonless mothers weeping,
And widowed girls, could look inside
The glory that hath them in keeping
Who went to the Great War and died,
They would rise and put their mourning off,
And say: "Thank God, he has enough!"

FOR LORD LUCAS

Having found wings, he tossed, light as a feather,
Airy as thistledown, 'twixt earth and sky.
Oh, but the dark earth held his soul in tether!
Could he come back who knew what 'twas to fly?

His gravitation's now for stars and planets:
These draw him, while the earth drops like a stone.
Strong-winged beyond the flight of gulls or gannets
He rises, ever rises; he is flown.

When he came back all Spring was in his vision;
Yet pined he like a wild bird in a net.
His dreams were all of fields and groves Elysian
Where he flew ever and no bounds were set.

Did someone bring his body down? Then gaily
He waved to his foe: "Your luck to-day, not mine";
Shook himself free of bonds that irked him daily
With the last courtesy, so brave and fine.

He has o'erflown return in the wild rapture.
What rumour of him in the unending space?
Flying so far, so fast, beyond recapture;
The flying ecstasy bright in his face.

THE FLYING MEN

Thou who guidest the swallow and wren,
Keep the paths of the flying men!

Over the mountains, over the seas
Thou hast given the bird-folk compasses.

Thou guidest them, yea, Thou leadest them
home
By the trackless ways and the venturesome.

Look Thou then on these bird-men, far
More than the sparrows and swallows are.

When they fly in the wintry weather
Be their compass and chart together.

Keep them riding the wind. Uphold
Their passion of flight lest it grow cold.

Thy right hand be under the wing,
Thy left hand for their steadying.

The wings of the birds of Heaven be nigh
Lest their wings fail them and they die.

Make Thou their flying as deft and fleet
As the flight of the linnet or the blue tit.

Thy hand over them, what shall appal?
Not the fierce foe nor the sudden fall.

Show them Thy moon at night: Thy stars
Bid stand as sentinels in their wars.

Yea, make their lone tracks pleasant as
A soft meandering path in grass.

Thou that launchest the wren, the swallow,
Guard our flying loves when they follow.

THE BROKEN SOLDIER

The broken soldier sings and whistles day
to dark;
He's but the remnant of a man, maimed
and half-blind,
But the soul they could not harm goes singing
like the lark,
Like the incarnate Joy that will not be
confined.

The Lady at the Hall has given him a light
task,
He works in the gardens as busy as a bee;
One hand is but a stump and his face a pitted
mask;
The gay soul goes singing like a bird set
free.

Whistling and singing like a linnet on wings;
The others stop to listen, leaning on the
spade,
Whole men and comely, they fret at little
things.
The soul of him's singing like a thrush in
a glade.

Hither and thither, hopping, like Robin on the grass,
The soul in the broken man is beautiful and brave;
And while he weeds the pansies and the bright hours pass,
The bird caught in the cage whistles its joyous stave.

THE YOUNG MOTHER

In dreadful times of death and war
She sails, a little fixèd star,
Or like a little ship she glides
With gentle winds and favouring tides
Up to the harbour bar.

Wrapped in all mild tranquillities
She muses: inward gaze her eyes;
And lest she slip upon a stone
Gabriel or some shining one
Guards her high destinies.

No rumour reaches her at all,
Beyond her safe encompassing wall,
Of a mad world that slays and slays:
She sees a little one that plays
And sleeps at evenfall.

She is the House of Life: and where
She goes the angels bend to her.
A little secret garden-close,
Sweet with the lily and the rose,
With frankincense and myrrh.

THE SHORT ROAD TO HEAVEN

There's a short road to Heaven, but you must take it young;
And if you're for long living the road is all as long;
A long road, a hard road with many a turn and twist,
The longer you'll be travelling the easier it's missed.

But the wise lads, the dear lads, they've put it to the touch,
The lads of sweet-and-twenty, and maybe not so much;
'Tis the green way they've taken in the Spring of their year,
When all their birds are singing to make them pleasant cheer.

The long road is dusty and never a streamlet sings,
The dust lies on the hedgerows and on the birdies' wings;

The longer that you travel the wearier you
are
And the farther off is Heaven and the stars
are far.

But the wise lads, the dear lads, the pathway's
dewy green
For the little Knights of Paradise of eighteen
and nineteen;
They run the road to Heaven, they are sing-
ing as they go,
And the blood of their sacrifice has washed
them white as snow.

The young mothers' darlings, ah, who would
bid them stay?
The short road to Heaven's a green and
pleasant way;
They run singing and leaping, they will be
in before
The night darkens on them—and there's
God at the door.

STARLING

The starling in the ivy now,
For to amuse his dear,
Mimics the dog, the cat, the cow,
Blackbird and Chanticleer.

The starling's an accomplished mime:
Between his love-making
He solaces her brooding-time
By many a madcap thing.

He is the saw, the spade, the scythe,
He rings the dinner-bell;
Chuckles of laughter, small and blithe,
Of self-laudations tell.

Now by the battle-field he mocks
As though 'twere but a game,
Thunder with which the belfry rocks
And the great burst of flame.

Till when the merriment will pall
He turns to love again,
Calling his love-sick gurgling call
Above the dying men.

Who knows what dream the starling weaves
Of boyhood, soft and clean?
A small room under golden eaves
To which the sun looks in.

The starling's talking in the thatch,
Bidding the boy arise;
And the door's opening on the latch
To show—his mother's eyes.

WINGS IN THE NIGHT

Now in the soft Spring midnight
  There's rush of wings and whirr,
Birds flying softly, swiftly;
  The night's a-flutter, astir.

Home by the bitter seas,
  They have sped home together.
So glad to be coming home
  To the grey hills, the grey weather.

Calling and calling softly,
  One lights by the window-pane:
The rook, weary with building,
  Turns to his sleep again.

Ere ever the moor-hens wake
  And the wild duck come in,
The birds are about the house
  With a long call and thin.

They have wakened the wood-pigeon
  To make her plaintive moan,
The wood-pigeon lamenting
  For sorrows not her own.

Oh, they are never birds,
But souls of men on the wind,
Seeking the mother's breast,
The heart that is soft and kind.

Souls of the Irish dead,
Flown from the fields of slaughter,
Home to the mother's arms
Over the wild grey water.

A WOMAN COMMENDS HER LITTLE SON

To the aid of my little son
I call all the magnalities:
Archangels, Dominions,
Powers and Principalities.

Mary without a stain,
Joseph that was her spouse,
All God's women and men,
Out of His glorious House.

The Twelve Apostles by him:
Matthew and Mark and John,
Luke, the Evangelists nigh him,
So he fight not alone.

Patrick, Columcille, Bride—
The Saints of the Irish nation;
Keiran, Kevin beside,
In the death and the desolation.

Listen, ye soldier saints,
Sebastian, Ignatius, Joan,
Be by his side; if he faints,
Strengthen my little son.

In the Side of Christ I lay him,
In the Wound that the spear made;
In the pierced Hands I stay him,
So I am not afraid.

On the knees of the Blessed Mary
And in the fold of her arm,
Refuge and sanctuary
Where he shall take no harm.

To the Wound in the Heart of Christ,
To the Trinity Three in One,
To the Blood spilled out, unpriced,
For love of my little son.

QUIET EYES

The boys come home, come home from war,
With quiet eyes for quiet things—
A child, a lamb, a flower, a star,
A bird that softly sings.

Young faces war-worn and deep-lined,
The satin smoothness past recall;
Yet out of sight is out of mind
For the worst wrong of all.

As nightmare dreams that pass with sleep,
The horror and grief intolerable.
The unremembering young eyes keep
Their innocence. All is well!

The worldling's eyes are dusty dim,
The eyes of sin are weary and cold,
The fighting boy brings home with him
The unsullied eyes of old.

The war has furrowed the young face.
Oh, there's no all-heal, no wound-wort!
The soul looks from its hidden place
Unharmed, unflawed, unhurt.

THE VESTAL

She goes unwedded all her days
Because some man she never knew,
Her destined mate, has won his bays,
Passed the low door of darkness through.

Sometimes she has a wild surmise
Of what dear name he used to have,
And what the colour of his eyes,
And was he gay or was he grave;

Or if his hair was brown or gold,
Or if his voice was low and clear
To tell his love with, never told
To hers or any woman's ear.

His voice is lost upon the wind;
And when the rain beats on her heart
His eyes elude her, warm and kind,
Where the dim shadows steal apart.

What of their children all unborn?
What of the house they should have built?
She wanders through her days forlorn,
The untasted cup of joy is spilt.

She lives unwedded,—as for him
He sleeps too sound for any fret
At their lost kisses, or the dream
Of the poor girl he never met.

MEDIATION

If Thou, Lord God, willest to judge
This, Thy very piteous clay,
Which to save Christ did not grudge
His last dying, I shall say:
" *Lord, I interpose Christ's death*
'Twixt these children and Thy wrath."

Then if Thou should'st say: Their shame
Is as scarlet in Mine eyes—
I shall ask: " *Who took their blame?*
Look, Lord, on this Sacrifice!
Is Thy Son's blood not more bright
Which hath washed their scarlet white? "

Then, if Thou Thy wrath should'st keep
And if Thy gaze should'st still avert
From Thy Son's most piteous sheep,
I shall ask: " *Who bare the hurt?*
I present Christ's death and pain
'Twixt Thine anger and these men."

Lord, they die by millions
And they look to Thee—take thought!—
This dear flock that is Thy Son's,
By the richest ransom bought.
See, Thy dead Son lies between
Thee, the High Judge, and their sin.

THE LONG VACATION

This is the time the boys come home from school,
Filling the house with gay and happy noise,
Never at rest from morn till evening cool—
All the roads of the world bring home the boys.

This is the time—but still they are not come;
The mothers stand in the doorway listening long;
Long, long they shall wait ere the boys come home.
Where do they tarry, the dear, the light-heart throng?

Their feet are heavy as lead and deep their rest.
The mothers watch the road till set of sun;
But nevermore the birds fly back to the nest.
The roads of the world run Heavenward every one.

HIS FOOTSTEP

The boy will come no more
Although I listen and long;
The sound of his feet on the floor
Was like an old song.

His foot had the music in it,
And now the music's dumb—
Like the song of the lark or linnet
Glad that Spring's come.

There's nothing stirring at all,—
'Tis quiet all by yourself,—
But a wee mouse in the wall,
The clock ticks on the shelf?

Like the song of the lark or linnet,
That's singing early and soon,
His foot had the music in it
Like an old tune.

WELCOME

We will not banish them as they were lost,
But in our daily talk their names be most,
Nor from our laughter be they shut away.

We shall tell over fond old stories of them
When they were little and we leant above them
Guarding from danger as God's angels may.

They come no more as they were used to come,
Yet in the quiet dawning and the gloam
Whose eyes are in the shadow and whose smile

Wavers and vanishes? Oh, is it you,
Child, are you come, with darkness and the dew,
To sit down and give comfort for a while?

To sit down as of old and lay your face
On a poor heart you have left comfortless,
To draw fond arms about your golden head?

So glad because you are not put away
Out of familiar things of every day,
Like a sad ghost dreaming that he is dead.

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

The door of Heaven is on the latch
To-night, and many a man is fain
To steal back and keep the watch
With his love again.

Now the children are in bed,
She hath spread the board, the fire's warm
Lest any come for heart's bread
In from the storm.

The twigs tap against the pane,
Dead leaves drift upon the floor.
Oh, who comes from the night and rain
As oft before?

His coat is damp with night-dew,
His cheek is wet against her cheek.
They kiss long as they used to do
Before they speak.

They sit down to the lit board;
With meat and wine he shall be fed.
And there is many a sweet word
That must be said.

Many a word of comforting
  Is said before the cock crow,
When they shall kiss and they shall cling,
  But he must go.

When all the world is fast asleep
  There's light in her window-pane
Where she and her Love the watch keep
  This night again.

LAST YEAR

Was it last Summer, just last year,
Or many and many a year ago,
Our hearts went shadowed by that fear?
Now Time and Space are darkened so
It might be fifty years since then,
And, Love, our boys are home again.

So long since we two bore that strain
And shook for what the day might bring!
And now our boys are home again,
'Scaped from the bitter and dreadful thing,
You will not turn, Love, to rejoice,
Even for the boys, Love, the safe boys!

So long, Love, since you went away,
And yet the laggard year's not spent!
Our boys are here, Love, brave and gay;
It is so long, Love, since you went.
If but this year were gone, who knows
What flower of hope might bud, what rose?

Only last year! So wide, so deep
The river runs 'twixt now and then.
Here is the feast of joy to keep,
Since, Love, the boys are home again.
But, dim in darkness lies last year
And the New Year, Love, the New Year!

PEACE

Though all the joys of life be done,
Who cares? so the dearest one
Laughs in the sun, plays in the sun.

Your heart's love and my heart's love
Walking in a Paradise grove
And the eyes of God above.

Come up hither, look with me!
On the pleasant green country,
Birds and flowers and waving tree.

Here the days go slow and dim
Lacking him and wanting him:
Life goes quicker than a dream.

Your heart's joy and my heart's joy
Set above care and annoy,
Golden boy and golden boy.

So that it goes well with these,
Love and Joy and sweetest ease,
Who cares if the world's amiss?

In the light and ambient air,
Groves and fields beyond compare,
Oh, they walk there, see they walk there!

THE VICTORS

The dead men to the living call:
  Brothers of old, how goes the day?
Is there ripe fruit on the Southern wall
  Rich with our blood that rot in clay?

Brothers of the great brotherhood,
  Do they fling roses for your feet?
The living heard them where they stood
  Idle, or trudged the pitiless street,

Hopeless, unwanted. Brothers of old,
  How go the song, the dance, the mirth?
So you are warm, we are not cold,
  Lapped in impenetrable earth.

The Victors stand in the market-place,
  And no man gives them wine or bread;
Would that we too had won that race
  And earned the clay-cold rest! they said.

But to the dead, who lie alone,
  They answered: It is well; go sleep,
Never to know what we have known;
  With dreams to keep; with dreams to keep!

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BIRDS AND FLOWERS AND BEAUTY OF EARTH

INTROIT: AN ECHO

I look and see the world is fair,
And marvel much at what can move
The Lord of Earth, the Lord of Air,
To such extremity of love.

Seeing we have so short a space
To abide on this side of the tomb,
We could have borne a barer place,
An unadorned but cleanly room.

Pilgrim am I and wayfarer,
Sojourner one night at an inn;
What matters if the room is bare,
So that the bed and sheets be clean?

But ah, dear Lord, this would not suit
Thy love for me, impure, unkind;
Thou settest the daisies at my feet,
Mak'st me the sky, mak'st me the wind.

Me doth ingenious Love devise
The mountains and the lakes and sea,
All roses and the peacock's eyes;
The sun runs round its course for me.

For me the children and the lambs,
  For me the nightingale and lark,
All fields and meadows and tall palms
  And the starred curtain of the dark.

Yea, in Thine Image, I am given
  The eyes to look beyond our night;
The love which makes of earth a Heaven,
  Yea, I am loved in my despite.

Why should I try to tell them o'er,
  Thy mercies that will not be said,
More than the sands on the sea-shore,
  More than the hairs upon my head?

Thou, Artisan and Architect,
  And Master-Lover, Master-Mind,
With wondrous cunning Thou hast decked
  These walls for common eyes and blind.

Since Thou dost such delights provide
  For passing earth and sinful men,
What can it be Thou settest aside
  For man when he is risen again?

What is it that Thou hast reserved?
  What glories on his sight will break,
When he sits down by angels served
  And at Thy board his thirst will slake?

Alas, my Lord, why wouldst Thou strive
To make so fair a house of call,
That there are some who here will live
As though Thy lovely earth were all?

Yea, though we turn Thy gifts to ill,
Make of Thy benefits our bane,
Thy love, Thy love, transcending still,
Seeks us again, finds us again.

A SONG OF A GARDEN

What a thing a garden is
For sweet dreams and quietness!

Roses and Lilies,
Narcissus, Daffodillies,
Irises and Phlox and Stocks
And the Sultan Hollyhocks.
Love-lies-bleeding—Love-in-a-mist—
Pansies tawny and amethyst.

What a thing a garden is
For medicinal heartease!

Lilac white and Lilac blue,
And a bird-song in the dew;
Apple-blossom white and rose,
Blue Forget-me-not and those
Pinks that have a spicy smell:
Honest Lavender as well.

What a thing a garden is
For the birds, for the bees!

Oh, from the dark earth to hale
Tulips and the Primrose pale!
Hyacinth, all that comes before
The full Summer's golden store;
For to create, for to bid live
These so sweet, so fugitive!

What a thing a garden is
To bid grow, to increase!

DOVE'S WEATHER

The day is a dove: she is preening an ash-grey feather:
The mountains have plumage of blue as wood-pigeons use.
Hark to the choir! the wood-pigeons moaning together
Make a soft music hid in the golds and the blues.

There's a flash of a rainbow on sea and woods: she is turning
In the pale sun her irised bosom and crest.
The dew-drenched grass is her mirror; the mist of the morning
Shot through with her burnished colours: the glint of her breast.

The day is a dove: her wings drop Peace as a raining,
Soft drift the orange and gold from the trees as she moves.
She broods o'er the world that rests at last uncomplaining,
Under her wings and her eyes, the colour of doves.

THE WAYSIDE BANK

With primroses gentle
She did her bedight,
Lovely was her mantle
With green and white.

The freaked gold cowslip
Did her adorn
With daisies that open
Their eyes at morn.

The blue of the speedwell
Made her sweet eyne.
Her cheek did the wild rose
Incarnadine.

With honeysuck and clover
And woodruff pale,
Embroidered over
Was her beauty's veil.

The road goes past her
In dust and heat;
Faster and faster
Go the wheels, the feet.

With roar and rattle
They leave her behind,
The people, the cattle,
They are deaf and blind.

But all night thorough
She sleeps in sweet dark,
Till from the furrow
Springs up the lark.

She bathes in May dew
Her morning face:
No flaunting garden
Shall her surpass.

And many a traveller
Who goes the way
Keeps a green thought of her
For the dusty day.

WINTER MORNING

(Brookhill, 1918)

The stars faded out of the paling sky,
Dropped through the waters, but the Morning Star
Grew brighter and brighter, and as day was nigh
A pure wind troubled the rushes near and far.

No bird was yet awake: only the duck
Homed to the little lake, fed full with streams:
Strange and unreal the full morning broke
On a still world as God saw it in dreams.

The still-life, austere world was grey and cool,
Lit by one burning torch of purest flame.
Home—from what hidden haunt, what secret pool?—
Borne on the morning wind, the wild duck came.

SPARROW

When August hangs the bough with plums,
The dusty city sparrow comes
For sojourn in the country sweet,
To taste the barley and the wheat.

Like any country bird he walks
Down the gold aisles of bearded stalks,
Pecks juicy grains in ear, and takes
His pleasure in the barley-brakes.

He bathes in dew at morn, and preens
His sooty coat to mock the sheens
Of swallow, fieldfare, finch and wren,
That hate the dusty ways of men.

His cynic wit, his mocking eye,
The innocent country ways decry;
Though dews may wash his feathers clean
He keeps the urchin's heart within.

The gossip his of chimney-stacks;
Wherefore the pleasant country lacks
Something, his ear the silence tires
Who nests amid the city spires.

To the perpetual green and gold
In dusk and dew his eyes are cold;
For his untravelled heart yet turns
Home where the smoky city burns.

A little while for health he stays
Where Flora paints the country ways,
But holds that still the town is best
For men and birds of wit and taste.

THE VIOLET FARM

If I might choose my simple lot
Far from the town and quite forgot,
All in a sheltered nook and warm,
'Tis I would have a violet farm.

No daffodils should me entice,
Nor hyacinths with their breath of spice,
The tulip with her painted hood
For me should wither where she stood.

Instead of sheep upon the sward,
The modest violet I would herd;
Instead of golden heads arow,
Would see my violet harvest blow;

Under an arch of wild, wild cloud,
Below an opal mountain bowed,
All in a humid world and cool,
With winds and waters beautiful.

What airs across my farm should breathe!
'Tis sweet where pinks and roses wreathe:
But pinks and roses are not sweet
Beside the hidden violet.

No shortest day of all the year
Should fade without a violet's cheer,
Invisible sweetness hid within
And folded up in swathes of green.

Though white and purple babes be born
When Daffodil his flaming horn
O'er quiet hills and vales shall sound
And stir the sleepers underground;

What country bliss can equal mine,
With violets for my flocks and kine,
With violets for my corn and store?
What could a mortal wish for more?

Under a mountain pansy-dark,
Loved of the eagle and the lark,
And set too low for fear or harm,
'Tis I would have a violet farm.

HOLIDAY

About my window in a wreath,
Pink roses yield their spicéd breath,
So that I can see and know
The very way that roses grow,
From the pink shoot upon the stem
Unto the fullest diadem.

All night the fragrant dew and cool
Lies like a little silver pool
About the corncrake's feet; he stalks
By emerald and by amber walks,
And is ensilvered by the moon
From his grey head to his grey shoon.

The wood-dove croons me into rest;
Night has a soft and dreamless breast;
The cuckoo hales me wide awake
From the far hill, the distant brake,
Shouting his cuckoo-call in showers
Over my bed as it were flowers.

Such quietness on vale and hill,
Such skies of rose and daffodil
And primrose, and the sleepy folk
Wrapped in the silence as a cloak
Broidered with roses small and close.
My dreams are drenched with attar of rose.

THE BLACKBIRD IN TOWN

In the stone-prisoned tree
The Blackbird sings.
Oh, what felicity
To cage such songs, such wings!

Betwixt the houses dull,
As in a grove,
The Blackbird beautiful
Sings his wild songs of love.

Nor lacks his inspiration
In the dull scene;
Sounds the last note of passion
Far from the country green.

He sings at noon, at night,
In stunted boughs,
As 'twere a palace of light,
A gold and emerald house.

As 'twere the wild wood spacious,
He sings and stays—
Mercy of God most gracious!—
Through the Spring nights and days.

ALL PASSES

Sweet, sweet, the lusty thrush
Sings in the evening hush:
Summer is come at last;
The grey day's over and past;
Better for birds and men.

So long the East wind stayed,
So long the rose delayed,
That now 'tis midsummer
When songs must die, my dear,
And silence come again.

Sing, thrush, while yet you may,
You have so brief a day,
You and the rose new-blown;
You are scarce here, you are flown;
The silence aches and stings.

The rose you waited for
Is here sweet as of yore;
And sweet's the hour and sweet
The day's long golden heat:
Alack, that songs have wings!

THE CHOICE

When skies are blue and days are bright
A kitchen-garden's my delight,
Set round with rows of decent box
And blowsy girls of hollyhocks.

Before the lark his Lauds hath done
And ere the corncrake's southward gone;
Before the thrush good-night hath said
And the young Summer's put to bed.

The currant-bushes' spicy smell,
Homely and honest, likes me well.
The while on strawberries I feast,
And raspberries the sun hath kissed.

Beans all a-blowing by a row
Of hives that great with honey go,
With mignonette and heaths to yield
The plundering bee his honey-field.

Sweet herbs in plenty, blue borage
And the delicious mint and sage,
Rosemary, marjoram, and rue,
And thyme to scent the winter through.

Here are small apples growing round,
And apricots all golden-gowned,
And plums that presently will flush
And show their bush a Burning Bush.

Cherries in nets against the wall,
Where Master Thrush his madrigal
Sings, and makes oath, a churl is he
Who grudges cherries for a fee.

Lavender, sweet-briar, orris. Here
Shall Beauty make her pomander,
Her sweet balls for to lay in clothes
That wrap her as the leaves the rose.

Take roses red and lilies white,
A kitchen-garden's my delight;
Its gillyflowers and phlox and cloves,
And its tall cote of irised doves.

THE CHOIR

The Blackbird now is never done,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
The Thrush to Love makes orison.

Now are the little fowls begun,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
Housebuilding all till set of sun.

Blithe Chanticleer his horn has blown,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
New iris hath the Dove put on:

Call in the softest monotone,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
It is not good to live alone.

The Lark from Heaven drops like a stone,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
Straight to his lovely love is gone.

The Nightingale makes lover's moan,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
Pressing his breast Love's thorn upon.

Each to his dainty feathered one,
Sweetheart! O Sweetheart!
Singing his lover's Laud and None.

THE FIRST CUCKOO

May had bid the young lambs play:
The first Cuckoo
Called from distant fields and grey.

Half a dream, and half a bird:
He said " Cuckoo,"
And what magic in the word!

'Twas new earth and a new heaven,
Where the Cuckoo
" Cuckoo " called from dawn to even.

Oh, thou bird of dreams, there come
With the Cuckoo
All lost summers winging home.

The lost days and the lost loves
Come with Cuckoo,
In soft flight like many doves.

Home from winter and the night
Fly with Cuckoo
The dead youth, the dead delight.

ROSA MYSTICA

This Rose so exquisite,
So perfect, so complete,
Beauty beyond all price,
With the hour it dies.

God makes Him roses fast,
With such magnificent haste,
Multitudes, multitudes,
In gardens, fields, and woods.

The roses tell His praise
Their little length of days;
Testify to His Name,
Gold on gold, flame on flame.

They are scarce here, scarce blown,
But they are gone, are flown;
The gardener's broom must sweep them
And in the darkness heap them.

Drift of rose-leaves upon
The garden-bed, the lawn:
The exquisite thought of God
Is scattered, wasted abroad.

What of the soul of the Rose?
It shall not die with those;
It shall wake, shall live again
In God's rose-garden.

It shall climb rose-trellises
Before God's palaces.
The Eternal Rose shall cover
The House of God all over.

She shall breathe out her soul
And yet living, made whole,
Shall offer her oblation
Out of her purest passion.

She shall know all bliss
Where God's garden is:
The Rose drinking her fill is
Of joy with her sister lilies.

Where the Water of Life sweet
Bathes her from head to feet,
The River of Life flows,
There is the Rose.

LARKS

All day in exquisite air
The song clomb an invisible stair,
Flight on flight, story on story,
Into the dazzling glory.

There was no bird, only a singing,
Up in the glory, climbing and winging,
Like a small golden cloud at even,
Trembling 'twixt earth and heaven.

I saw no staircase, winding, winding,
Up in the dazzle, sapphire and blinding,
Yet round by round, in exquisite air,
The song went up the stair.

FURNESS

From my low window I behold
No skies but just a golden wood,
A stretch of golden grass, and gold
Sheep in the golden solitude.

Somewhere the sunset turns to rose,
And all the world is faintly pink,
Lit through with golden fires and those
Rose pools where rosy cattle drink.

Deepens the rose, a fairy hill
They call the Lamb's Back, softly curled,
Is now a rosy lamb and still
Grows rosier in a rosy world.

Awhile my window holds the gold,
The rose, before they fall to grey
Ashes of roses, still and cold,
On wood and hill and waterway.

IN THE WOOD

Night's in the wood now, in poplars and larches,
Sycamore and chestnut, till the dawn shall wake.
Who is he goes shouting through the fairy arches?
Who is this brawler by bush and brake?

Oh, this is the Blackbird. He will not be quiet,
He wakes the wedding-couches in the old madcap way.
"Good-night and good-night now!" With laughter and riot,
He sets the nests to twitter in the twilight grey.

"Good-night and good-night now!" Oh, rascal, give over!
Tits and linnets answer with a sleepy call.
"Once more a good-night now to every lass and lover!"
The sleepy wood is stirring to hear him brawl.

Dark is the wood now: the birds should be sleeping;
Thrushes, finches, dreaming till the break of day.
And still the rogue, Blackbird, the wood awake is keeping,
Shouting "Good-night, now!" in the old madcap way.

PINK ALMOND

So delicate, so airy,
The almond on the tree,
Pink stars that some good fairy
Has made for you and me.

A little cloud of roses,
All in a world of grey,
The almond flower uncloses
Upon the wild March day.

A mist of roses blowing
The way of fog and sleet,
A dust of roses showing
For grey dust in the street.

Pink snow upon the branches,
Pink snowflakes falling down
In rosy avalanches
Upon the dreary town.

A rain, a shower of roses,
All in a roseless day;
The almond-tree uncloses
Her roses on the grey.

CHAFFINCH

Wet! wet! Hear Chaffinch! He cries and calls,
Cries and calls from the snowy cherry-bough,—
Chaffinch sighing and crying for water-falls,
For the feel of the rain and her delicate freshness now.

Wet! wet! O Chaffinch, will you not tire?
After the drought and dust the rain is sweet.
The sap runs in the trees to the heart's desire,
The grass hears, the little hearts are a-beat.

White's the cherry orchard from head to foot.
This is the golden moment of all the year.
Over the song of the thrush and the blackbird's flute
Wet! wet! the Chaffinch calls to his dear.

Down where the amber evening stretches for miles
There's a golden-bosomed cloud on the sky serene.

A little cloud afloat from the Golden Isles
Grows and grows in the amber sea and the green.

Wet! wet! Hear Chaffinch! and Chaffinch knows.
Chaffinch calls to his dear in the heavenly gloam.
Wet! wet! The rain as sweet as a rose
Will drench the orchard to-night and the cherry-bloom.

CHANTICLEER

Of all the birds from East to West
That tuneful are and dear,
I love that farmyard bird the best,
They call him Chanticleer.

Gold plume and copper plume,
Comb of scarlet gay;
'Tis he that scatters night and gloom,
And summons back the day!

He is the sun's brave herald
Who, ringing his blithe horn,
Calls round a world dew-pearled
The heavenly airs of morn.

Oh, clear gold, shrill and bold,
He calls through creeping mist
The mountains from the night and cold
To rose and amethyst.

He sets the birds to singing,
And calls the flowers to rise;
The morning cometh, bringing
Sweet sleep to heavy eyes.

Gold plume and silver plume,
Comb of coral gay;
'Tis he packs off the night and gloom,
And summons home the day.

Black fear he sends it flying,
Black care he drives afar;
And creeping shadows sighing
Before the morning star.

The birds of all the forest
Have dear and pleasant cheer,
But still I hold the rarest
The farmyard Chanticleer.

Red cock and black cock,
Gold cock or white,
The flower of all the feathered flock,
He summons back the light!

LOVE AT EASTER

Sing to the Lord a new song!
Because the Spring comes newly,
And every slender sapling
Has budded green and red.
Sing to the Lord a new song!
The skylark sings it truly,
Since all in dewy April
His love and he are wed.

Sing to the Lord a new song!
For every bird's a lover,
And o'er the purple furrows
The green spears nod and wave.
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Since Lenten fasts are over,
And Easter's come in glory,
And Christ has left the grave.

Sing to the Lord a new song!
A song of love and wedding,
For every bird is building
His nest in bower and tree.
Sing to the Lord a new song!
The tufts of soft wool spreading
Where a brown wife and babies
This Easter-tide shall be.

CALLING THE BIRDS

Who close beside our window-pane
  Whistles thrice at the dawn of day,
And listens, for his answer fain?
  Toujours gai.

Who bids the merry din resound,
  While oaten pipes are silvery gray,
Ere chanticleer first turns him round?
  Toujours gai.

Who bids the corncrake, shrill and blithe,
  Wake up on his sweet couch of hay,
And whirr against the mower's scythe?
  Toujours gai.

Who hales the finch from dreams of love,
  And linnet to his roundelay,
And from Love's arms the wooing dove?
  Toujours gai.

Who calls the robin and the starling,
  And bids the blackbird's flute to play,
The thrush to sing: O darling, darling?
  Toujours gai.

Who is it wakes the sparrows' wall,
And sets a-tremble every spray,
With flutter, and chatter, and trill, and call?
Toujours gai.

This whistling thief at sweet o' the year,
O is he bird, or boy, or fay?
Mayhap, some fairy chanticleer.
Toujours gai.

May he be fed on honey and kisses,
And where the undying roses stay
Wake the sweet world to newer blisses,
Toujours gai.

THE THRUSH AND THE MAN

Time to get up! Time to get up! says the Thrush,
Shouting the golden hours of morning through.
Every bird is merry in bower and bush:
Love's in flower and a thousand things to do.
Time to get up! Time to get up! he calls.
Slug-a-bed! slug-abed! mocking and calling yet.
O Thrush, be still! For a day has a yoke that galls,
A grief, a weariness: let me sleep and forget.

You'll be late! You'll be late! says the Thrush: too late for feast.
Winter's over: rise and be joyful now.
The wind in the South forgets that once it was East;
There's snow on the thorn and rose on the apple-bough.

O Thrush, be silent! Let me rest from my cares,
From grief that irks, and age that comes and the night.
You'll be late! says the Thrush. See the sun!
You'll be late for prayers.
We've sung our Prime and Matins and None's in sight.

Share it!—share it!—share it! says the Thrush,
Changing his note to suit unhappy me.
When love shares the burden, what is it? Tush!
Heavy for one is light for two, for three.
Share it!—share it! calls again and flies.
Comfort, counsel for a hapless ear.
Sure, Minerva's fowl was not so wise!
Time to get up! O Thrush, I rise—I hear!

A NEW OLD SONG

The Spring comes slowly up this way,
  Slowly, slowly!
A little nearer every day.

The blackbird's trilling shrill and gay
His roundelay and virelay,
Good lack, as though the March were May!

In kirtle all of green and gray;
  Slowly, slowly,
The Spring comes slowly up this way!

She hath delicious things to say,
But will not answer yea or nay,
Nor haste her secrets to display.

The Spring comes slowly up this way,
  Slowly, slowly!
To make the world high holiday.

The pink is on the orchard spray,
The lambs put off their fears and play,
Gone are the snows of yesterday.

'Twere well if Spring might always stay!
  Slowly, slowly,
The Spring comes slowly up this way.

POPPY

The poppy flaunts a petticoat
Of airy films that fly and float;
Of fairy gauzes, fairy-fine,
Lucent and crystalline.

Lighter than lightest gossamer,
Or the moth's wing at eve astir;
Frills of the scarlet set arow,
And rosiest rose on snow.

No dancing Graces can reveal
Flounces like hers from knee to heel;
No fairy twirl of fairy girl
Scatters such rose and pearl.

The fairies laundered this last night,
By glow-worm light for candle-light;
This in the dews was washed and steeped
While drowsy mortals slept.

The little fairy fingers feat
Ironed it out so neat and sweet,
And set the frills with dainty skill,
Ruffled at the wind's will.

The poppy wears her silk and lace,
Clear-starched, with such a delicate grace,
Her silken flouncing hides and shows
As the wind goes and blows.

THE MAKER

God made the country,
Man made the town.
God clad the country
In a green gown,

Clad her in kirtle
Of the green silk,
God made the country
Of honey and milk.

Poor folk from Eden
Driven away,
God made the country
For a holiday.

God gave the country
A flower, a bird,
To comfort his children
For the flaming sword.

For easing and pleasing
He made a tree,
Many a sweet rivulet,
Dew, and the bee.

God made the country
Man made the town.
Is not God a Maker
Of great renown?

PLANTING BULBS

Setting my bulbs arow
In cold earth under the grasses,
Till the frost and the snow
Are gone and the Winter passes—

Sudden a foot-fall light,
Sudden a bird-call ringing;
And these in gold and in white
Shall rise with a sound of winging;

Airy and delicate all,
All go trooping and dancing
At Spring's call and foot-fall,
Airily dancing, advancing.

In the dark of the year,
Turning the earth so chilly,
I look to the day of cheer,
Primrose and daffodilly.

Turning the sods and the clay,
I think on the poor sad people
Hiding their dead away
In the churchyard, under the steeple.

All poor women and men,
  Broken-hearted and weeping,
Their dead they call on in vain,
  Quietly smiling and sleeping.

Friends, now listen and hear,
  Give over crying and grieving,
There shall come a day and a year
  When the dead shall be as the living.

There shall come a call, a foot-fall,
  And the golden trumpeters blowing
Shall stir the dead with their call,
  Bid them be rising and going.

Then in the daffodil weather
  Lover shall run to lover;
Friends all trooping together;
  Death and Winter be over.

Laying my bulbs in the dark,
  Visions have I of hereafter.
Lip to lip, breast to breast, hark!
  No more weeping, but laughter.

THE MAKING OF BIRDS

God made Him birds in a pleasant humour;
Tired of planets and suns was He.
He said: I will add a glory to Summer,
Gifts for my creature banished from Me!

He had a thought and it set Him smiling
Of the shape of a bird and its glancing head,
Its dainty air and its grace beguiling:
"I will make feathers," the Lord God said.

He made the robin; He made the swallow;
His deft hands moulding the shape to His mood,
The thrush and lark and the finch to follow,
And laughed to see that His work was good.

He who has given men gift of laughter—
Made in His image; He fashioned fit
The blink of the owl and the stork thereafter,
The little wren and the long-tailed tit.

He spent in the making His wit and fancies;
The wing-feathers He fashioned them strong;
Deft and dear as daisies and pansies,
He crowned His work with the gift of song.

Dearlings, He said, make songs for My praises!
He tossed them loose to the sun and wind,
Airily sweet as pansies and daisies;
He taught them to build a nest to their mind.

The dear Lord God of His glories weary—
Christ our Lord had the heart of a boy—
Made Him birds in a moment merry,
Bade them soar and sing for His joy.

BLACKBIRD

Day turns to night
And the Blackbird sings
In the grey twilight
A song of heavenly things.

He sings and he sways,
Is it joy or pain?
What is the word he says
That breaks the heart in twain?

O Blackbird asthore,
If I were in Heaven
I'd find an open door
Some sweet March even.

I would leave that bliss
To hear again
Your dear wild ecstasies
In a wet March lane.

Joy of immortal things,
Grief of mortality,
The Blackbird sways and sings
On a yet leafless tree.

The soul within its cage
  Flutters in joy, in pain,
The Blackbird sings—oh, Mage!
  In a wet March lane.

RECONNAISSANCE

'Twere bliss to see one lark
Soar to the azure dark
Singing upon his high celestial road.
I have seen many hundreds soar, thank God!

To see one Spring begin
In her first heavenly green,
Were grace unmeet for any mortal clod.
I have seen many Springs begin, thank God!

After the lark the swallow,
Blackbirds in hill and hollow,
Thrushes and nightingales all roads I trod,
As though one bird were not enough, thank
God!

Not one flower, but a rout,
All exquisite, are out:
All white and golden every stretch of sod,
As though one flower were not enough, thank
God!

AFTER GREAT DROUGHT

The rain gropes with delicate pushing fingers
At the dry lips of the small things, dying of pain,
Gives of her breast. 'Twas but a dream! She tarries and lingers.
The thirsty death is upon them. Hasten, O Rain!

It is no dream, little sisters! Her white foot passes,
Plashing in water sweeter than honey-dew.
Take heart, O slender ones, all ye flowers and ye grasses,
The river of life is running for you and you.

Fainting and dying, the cattle in bone-dry pasture
Dream in a mirage of water up to the hocks.
Hope, little brothers! The glint of her white, wet vesture
Cheats you no longer. Hark to the water-brooks!

Earth's sick children, the old and the fevered bodies
That had no rest for the fierce heat and the drouth,
Ask: Is it she? the beloved, the life-giving goddess?
Her wet hands in their hair, her kiss on their mouth.

Ring out, ye garden bells, from a fairy steeple;
Canterbury bells and harebells shake all the towers,
Because our God wills not the death of the people,
Because His Rain comforts this earth of ours.

Because the glad streams are running by hills and valleys,
Because the springs are filling; the wet wind blows,
The draught of life flows fast from a brimming chalice,
The world's as sweet as a rose: a rain-wet rose.

FLOCKS AND HERDS

Grey spring day
And a grey sky,
Like flocks of sheep and lambs
The low clouds lie.

South wind, a shepherd,
Quietly masses
Tender flocks and herds
To the grey grasses.

Like a kind shepherd,
To the grey hill,
Drives his flocks and herds
The way he will.

Sward grey as dew
Sudden discloses
Glimpse of tender gold,
Ashes of roses.

Through the mild country,
Grey as a dove,
Clouds like sheep and lambs
Quietly rove.

Low gleam the pastures
  Of the low sky;
Like sheep and lambs at rest
  The grey clouds lie.

ST. LUKE'S SUMMER

This is St. Luke, his Summer: you shall see
The Spirit of Summer flit by hill and lea.
The Earth turns from her dying to rejoice
Thinking the Spring comes, from the robin's
voice,
She takes to be the thrush's. Oh, she is
young,
She was but dreaming she was old so long.

This is St. Luke, his Summer: silver of mist
Covers the mountains, shot with amethyst.
The heat lies in the valleys: sheep and kine
Are glad deep down in opal and sapphirine.
Cool dews about their feet and springing
grass,
They think: How like a dream the Winters
pass!

The bee goes questing for honey in amaze,
To find so few flowers in the golden ways
And all the trees barred like himself in gold.
He thinks Winter a story that is told,
So pale the Summer goes like a sweet ghost
A little while before the nipping frost.

GOLDEN HOUR

This is the one enchanted minute,
All the year's golden meaning in it;
Her full fruition and her flower
Rained like a golden Danaë shower.

The hours run golden in the glass,
The hours shake gold-dust on the grass,
Where meadows late were brown and grey.
This is the kingcup's holiday.

The fortunate road runs white, unrolled
'Twixt ribbons of the purest gold.
Traveller for Eldorado, ho!
This is the way that you must go.

Laburnum swings her golden chain;
Gold honeysucks by porch and pane
Will hoard their sweetest sweets until
The gold moon climbs the golden hill.

Hear the enamoured nightingale
Call over golden fields dew-pale,
In the enchanted dusk—oh, hear it!
But is it bird, or is it spirit?

The wind ruffles the golden trees,
And makes his golden melodies.
The dawn was golden, and the close
Of evening made a golden rose.

It is the one enchanted hour,
When the year breaks to golden flower.
The sands run in the glass—to-morrow,
To-morrow looms a golden sorrow.

AUGUST WEATHER

Dead heat and windless air,
And silence over all;
Never a leaf astir,
But the ripe apples fall;
Plums are purple-red,
Pears amber and brown;
Thud! in the garden-bed!
Ripe apples fall down.

Air like a cider-press
With the bruised apples' scent;
Low whistles express
Some sleepy bird's content;
Still world and windless sky,
A mist of heat o'er all;
Peace like a lullaby,
And the ripe apples fall.

ALLELUIA!

With windflower now and daffodil,
That bird they call cuckoo
Goes shouting now o'er vale and hill
His Allelu—
Alleluia!

He feasts him on the cuckoo's meat,
The wood-sorrel, so new,
And shouts his grace ere he doth eat—
His Allelu—
Alleluia!

Sith Christ hath left the wormy grave
The world's in green and blue,
This clerk sings piously his stave,
His Allelu—
Alleluia!

Up hearts! for Jesus Christ, His sake,
Who by His dying slew
Both death and sin. Here's one awake
Calls Allelu—
Alleluia!

THE SILENT TIME

Singing of birds is over: the Curlew only
Out by the bog-pools bids his mate to beware.
Long sweet whistles under the rushes lonely
Set to listen the dew-wet ears of a hare.

Ears and eyes that turn backward. Only the plover
Pipes and is silent; the singing of birds is done;
Over the marriage-song and the song of a lover;
Over the songs to the children feathered and flown.

The wood-dove hidden in leafage mourning for ever,
Because her children are Two, only Two, only Two,
And the Wren and the Robin have Nine and Ten in the quiver.
What will she do, the soft Wood-dove? What will she do?

The Curlew calls love-calls and his mate will
listen,
The Wood-dove mourns and mourns and
is never still.
The hare hears; the dew on his ears a-glisten;
He thinks it a whistling boy coming over
the hill.

WINTER

Now Winter as a shrivelled scroll
  Casts the rags of Summer away,
Naked and beautiful the stripped soul
  Haunts the bare woods, austere and grey.

Clean in the quiet hour she goes
  She has renounced the lure of sense,
More beautiful than the gold and rose
  In her thin veil of innocence.

White as the snow she walks the woods,
  More beautiful than the joyous Spring:
Scourged of the winds and washed by floods,
  Spirit and flame, with a drooped wing.

There is not a stain in this pale light,
  The new-washed skies, the tonic air,
She, the moon's sister, walks the height,
  A spiritual beauty past compare.

When all the Summer world is dust
  And Autumn glories fallen to clay,
This soul of beauty, chill, august,
  Wanders by wood and waterway.

LEGENDS AND FANTASIES

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THE CHILDREN OF LIR

Out upon the sand-dunes thrive the coarse long grasses,
Herons standing knee-deep in the brackish pool,
Overhead the sunset fire and flame amasses,
And the moon to eastward rises pale and cool:
Rose and green around her, silver-grey and pearly,
Chequered with the black rooks flying home to bed;
For, to wake at daybreak, birds must couch them early,
And the day's a long one since the dawn was red.

On the chilly lakelet, in that pleasant gloaming,
See the sad swans sailing: they shall have no rest:
Never a voice to greet them save the bittern's booming
Where the ghostly sallows sway against the West.

" Sister," saith the grey swan, " Sister, I am weary,"
Turning to the white swan wet, despairing eyes;
" O," she saith, " my young one. O," she saith, " my dearie ",
Casts her wings about him with a storm of cries.

Woe for Lir's sweet children whom their vile stepmother
Glamoured with her witch-spells for a thousand years;
Died their father raving, on his throne another,
Blind before the end came from the burning tears.
Long the swans have wandered over lake and river.
Gone is all the glory of the race of Lir,
Gone and long forgotten like a dream of fever;
But the swans remember the sweet days that were.

Hugh, the black and white swan with the beauteous feathers,
Fiachra, the black swan with the emerald breast,
Conn, the youngest, dearest, sheltered in all weathers,
Him his snow-white sister loves the tenderest.

These her mother gave her as she lay a-dying
To her faithful keeping; faithful hath she been,
With her wings spread o'er them when the tempest's crying,
And her songs so hopeful when the sky's serene.

Other swans have nests made 'mid the reeds and rushes,
Lined with downy feathers where the cygnets sleep
Dreaming, if a bird dreams, till the daylight blushes,
Then they sail out swiftly on the current deep.
With the proud swan-father, tall, and strong, and stately,
And the mild swan-mother, grave with household cares,
All well-born and comely, all rejoicing greatly:
Full of honest pleasure is a life like theirs.

But alas! for my swans, with the human nature,
Sick with human longings, starved for human ties,
With their hearts all human cramped to a bird's stature,
And the human weeping in the bird's soft eyes,

Never shall my swans build nests in some green river,
Never fly to Southward in the autumn grey,
Bear no tender children, love no mates for ever,
Robbed alike of bird's joys and of man's are they.

Babbles Conn the youngest, "Sister, I remember
At my father's palace how I went in silk,
Ate the juicy deer-flesh roasted from the ember,
Drank from golden goblets my child's draught of milk.
Once I rode a-hunting, laughed to see the hurly,
Shouted at the ball-play, on the lake did row;
You had for your beauty gauds that shone so rarely."
"Peace," saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago."

"Sister," saith Fiachra, "well do I remember
How the flaming torches lit the banquet-hall
And the fire leapt skyward in the mid-December,
And among the rushes slept our stag-hounds tall.

By our father's right hand you sat shyly gazing,
Smiling half and sighing, with your eyes aglow,
As the bards sang loudly, all your beauty praising."
"Peace," saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago."

"Sister," then saith Hugh, "most do I remember
One I called my brother, one, earth's goodliest man,
Strong as forest oaks are where the wild vines clamber,
First at feast or hunting, in the battle's van.
Angus, you were handsome, wise and true, and tender,
Loved by every comrade, feared by every foe:
Low, low, lies your beauty, all forgot your splendour."
"Peace," saith Fionnuala, "that was long ago."

Dews are in the clear air, and the roselight paling,
Over sands and sedges shines the evening star,

And the moon's disc lonely high in heaven is sailing,
Silvered all the spear-heads of the rushes are,—
Housèd warm are all things as the night grows colder,
Water-fowl and sky-fowl dreamless in the nest;
But the swans go drifting, drooping wing and shoulder
Cleaving the still water where the fishes rest.

THE FOUNTAIN

(Cologne, 1923)

That was the Lorelei, tall within the jet
  Of springing water.
Lovely from silver head to her slim feet
  She, a King's daughter,

Caught in a pale enchantment: there came
    gleams
  Of throat and bosom,
Rose-pale, and bathed in the pellucid streams,
  Fine as fruit-blossom,

Betwixt the poplars and the tulip-trees,
  Crystal and slender.
Where are her maids? Not any one of these
  Naiads attend her.

That was the Lorelei: for a little while
  Lost to her mountain,
One moment shone her pale, her exquisite
    smile,
  Caught in the fountain.

COMING BACK

As I went through the ancient town,
Long lost and found once more,
Oh, who is this in a green gown
I knew so well of yore?

Veils of enchantment hid the place,
Hung every street and square:
I felt the sea-wind in my face
And the ruffling in my hair.

O town I loved so well and lost,
And find again with tears,
Your streets hold many a darling ghost
And all the vanished years!

My heart went singing a low song,
Glad to be home again.
But who is this comes blithe and young,
Not feared of life but fain?

Oh, who is this comes cold as a stone
To my quick cry and call?
Of all the faces loved and flown
I knew her best of all.

" Stay, you are . . ." Is she deaf and blind,
Or hath she quite forgot?
What chill is in the sun, the wind,
Because she knows me not?

As I went down—my eyes were wet—
Eager and stepping fast
That was my own sweet youth I met,
Who knew me not and passed.

THE LITTLE BRETHREN

Brendan went to the greenwood
On the Eve of good St. John.
He prayed for all God's creatures
Before his prayers were done.

The birds, the fish in the sea,
And the wild wood-folk,
He was their friend, their father,
Sheltered beneath his cloak.

The wood was full of whispers,
Magic and mystery;
He mused on the Love of God
Below a white-thorn tree.

The leaves stirred in the shadows,
The wind sank to its rest.
The little birds in the branches
Dreamed sweetly, breast to breast.

He had laid his breviary by,
His vespers were all said.
But who may be these little folk,
All in the white and red?

Oh, who are these small people,
These flowers all come alive,
Dancing the gayest measure,
As busy as a hive?

One like a sweet-pea rosy
Upon his shoulder lit.
His hand gathered another
And softly cradled it.

O little ones like roses
And poppies and heartsease,
Good luck to your gay dances
Beneath the forest trees!

They have turned about and heard him,
They rustle in soft flight,
Their wings are brushing his forehead,
Soft as the moths and light.

Like a pale flight of rose-leaves
They settle airily down;
As golden bees in a swarm
They cling to his hair, his gown.

Oh, who are ye, small brethren,
Sweeter than birds or flowers?
He heard a little laughter,
Footsteps of summer showers.

There is one like a humming-bird
Perched on his thinning curls.

Oh, who are ye, small people,
As milky white as pearls?

Like pearls and the opal's sheen
The little bodies show.
Ye are sweet as the girl-children
That light earth's shades below.

Then spoke the fairest one—
And all were still to hear:
I am the Queen of Faery,
I live a thousand year.

We are glad, we faery folk,
Unfretted by a soul.
We dance till the Day of Judgment
Shrivels us as a scroll.

We envy not folk human.
We know not cark nor care.
The cheek of a woman withers,
The dust is on her hair.

But there is trouble in Faery,
For some of us desire
A soul like the human people;
Desire burns as a fire.

There's blight on our faery laughter—
I know not why nor whence.
In the centuries gone over
We had but innocence.

But since a whisper reached us
Of a strange heavenly Birth,
A King that died in torment
To save the folk on earth,

We are troubled, we folk of Faery.
And wherefore who shall know?—
That a King for love's sake perished
Hundreds of years ago.

There is grief on the faery people,
The joy has canker and fret.
How can I get them souls, say,
Souls to be saved them yet?

Puck and Peasblossom, hasten,
Bring water from the spring!
And say the words, thou wise one,
The words of Christening.

Now like a myriad rose-leaves
Softly the children press,
Kissing his hands, his habit,
With many a shy caress.

Upon his palm he held her,
Soft as a golden bee:
Answer me, little sister,
Before I answer thee.

Answer me, little sister:
Do these small flowers o' the air

Love Him who lay all bloody
Upon the Cross and bare?

Not *love*, she answered, sighing.
How should we love this King,
Who love but youth and beauty—
Not any dreadful thing?

We are neither sick nor sorry,
We have neither hate nor scorn.
We fear the sickly body,
The soul of man forlorn.

Alack, then, sweetest sister.
His voice was kind and fine.
By that sign ye are soulless,
Yea, by that sign, that sign.

Only by tears and pity,
And by the blood-stained road,
We come to the heavenly city
And Jesus Christ our God.

He stretched his hands in blessing.
The forest sighed and sighed.
They are gone like moths of Faery,
Gold-winged and peacock-eyed.

The forest rustled and murmured:
Their voices at his ears
As ghosts of the unborn children
Wept: and he heard their tears.

NYMPHS

Where are ye now, O beautiful girls of the mountain,
Oreads all?
Nothing at all stirs here save the drip of the fountain;
Answers our call
Only the heart-glad thrush, in the Vale of Thrushes;
Stirs in the brake
But the dew-bright ears of the hare in his couch of rushes
Listening, awake.

Flashes awhile the fin of a trout in the waters
Silver and cool.
Where are ye, flowers, maids of the woods, and the daughters
Of river and pool?
Clad in silver, wrought with roses and pansies,
Many a leaf;
Lovely your milk-white arms linked in the dances:
Gone for our grief.

Delicate hands, soft touches out of the twilight,
Lighter than wings;
Whispering voices heard in the dawn and the shy light;
Something that clings
Like scented hair blown back on the lightest zephyr.
Where are ye gone?
Dewy eyes like the eyes of a milk-white heifer,
Vanished and flown.

THE LITTLE GHOST

The stars began to peep,
Gone was the bitter day.
She heard the milky ewes
Bleat to their lambs astray.
Her heart cried for her lamb
Lapped cold in the churchyard sod;
She could not think on the happy children
At play with the Lamb of God.

She heard the calling ewes
And the lambs' answer, alas!
She heard her heart's blood drip in the night
As the ewes' milk on the grass.
Her tears that burnt like fire
So bitter and slow ran down;
She could not think on the new-washed children
Playing by Mary's gown.

Oh, who is this comes in
Over her threshold stone?
And why is the old dog wild with joy
That all day long made moan?

This fair little radiant ghost,
  Her one little son of seven,
New 'scaped from the band of merry children
  In the nurseries of Heaven.

He was all clad in white
  Without a speck or stain;
His curls had a ring of light
  That rose and fell again.
Now come with me, my own mother,
  And you shall have great ease,
For you shall see the lost children
  Gathered to Mary's knees.

Oh, lightly sprang she up,
  Nor waked her sleeping man,
And hand in hand with the little ghost
  Through the dark night she ran.
She is gone swift as a fawn,
  As a bird homes to its nest,
She has seen them lie, the sleepy children,
  'Twixt Mary's arm and breast.

At morning she came back;
  Her eyes were strange to see;
She will not fear the long journey,
  However long it be.
As she goes in and out
  She sings unto hersel';
For she has seen the mothers' children
  And knows that it is well.

THE TREE-LOVER

THE TREE-LOVER

Sweet in the sweet May weather
Trees go airy and bright;
Winged with the gold-green feather,
Veiled in the deep-sea light.

Clad in the emerald silk,
All a-flutter, a-glitter;
Blossoms white as the milk,
Never were roses sweeter.

Leafy shadows, all dancing,
Lovely in shine and shower,
Ever twinkling and glancing,
Birds have built them a bower.

Lord of the leaf and tree,
When 'tis time for my going,
Leafing time let it be,
Neither snowing nor blowing!

After that journey taken
Let me open my eyes
To woods by a May-wind shaken,
Full of the birds' replies.

Paradise woods in Spring
  Scarcely than Earth's were sweeter;
Every leaf's on the wing,
  All a-flutter, a-glitter.

Paradise woods in commotion,
  Tossed in a heavenly May;
After the bitter ocean,
  Dear and homelike were they.

Lord of the world to be,
  Build me no jasper palace,
But the young leaf on the tree,
  And the young bloom on the trellis!

POPLAR (I.)

The blinding sky's unkind,
The day has dust and glare,
The Poplar keeps the wind
In her cage of light and air,
Makes of her leaves a snare
To keep the wind confined;
All in the breathless glare
The Poplar holds the wind.

Oh, cool and beautiful
Her leaves of silver-grey
Hang in the wind so cool
In the blind and breathless day!
Turn in the wind at play,
Fresh as a little pool
That in the forest grey
Holds silver fins and cool.

All other trees are still,
The oak, the elm, and the beech,
But the Poplar hath her fill
Of soft and gracious speech.
The winds are out of reach
Beyond the sea and the hill
For the oak, and elm, and beech,
But the Poplar hath her fill.

POPLAR (II.)

No gale that heaven could send her
Troubles the lands or seas,
Yet Poplar, that pretender,
Green-kirtled to the knees,

Is crying and complaining,
Lashed by a fancied storm,
And now to earth is straining
Her silk and slender form.

A lady with a vapour,
She faints and shrieks and cries;
Again, like a tall taper,
Aspires to the still skies.

Though lad and lass go Maying,
Though June hath brought the rose,
She yet goes masquing, playing,
At times of storms and snows.

There's a soft voice of laughter
Amid her leafy screen,
Like small hands clapping after
The players' merriest scene.

And yet the Poplar mocking,
Of storms she has her fill,
And now wind-tossed and rocking,
And now demure and still,

So tall, so fair, so slender,
Plays with such charm her part,
Who sees must still commend her,
Who hears exalt her art.

THE TREE OF LIFE

When that Man was cast away
  Out of Eden for his sin,
God put by His wrath to say:
  " Now his sad time shall begin;

My poor creature, made to walk
  By Me under forest trees,
Made to walk with Me and talk
  When the evening brings much ease:

Since a tree hath him undone,
  My poor creature that I planned,
By a Tree he shall be won,
  Given again into My Hand."

God took up a seed of life,
  Planted it in tear-wet earth:
" My poor Adam and his wife
  Shall have shade and quiet mirth.

This, My tree shall grow and grow
  Till its branches fill the air;
Not My groves of Heaven may show
  Princely Fruit as this shall bear.

Hanging head and knees, alack,
This shall bear a noble Flower,
And my Tree will give Me back
What I lost by Eden bower."

OF AN ORCHARD

Good is an Orchard, the Saint saith,
To meditate on life and death,
With a cool well, a hive of bees,
A hermit's grot below the trees.

Good is an Orchard: very good,
Though one should wear no monkish hood.
Right good, when Spring awakes her flute,
And good, in yellowing time of fruit.

Very good in the grass to lie,
And see the network 'gainst the sky,
A living lace of blue and green,
And boughs that let the gold between.

The bees are types of souls that dwell
With honey in a quiet cell;
The ripe fruit figures goldenly
The soul's perfection in God's eye.

Prayer and praise in a country home,
Honey and fruit: a man might come,
Fed on such meats, to walk abroad,
And in his Orchard talk with God.

BROWN TREES

Now are the valleys brown 'twixt bluest hills,
From the thick branches bursts the leaf to flower,
Wild for the Spring-time world to feast their fill
Of new life and beauty in the magic hour.

Tight buds unswathing on the sap-filled tree,
Brown trees and purple on the azure dark,
Brown in the heather now the questing bee,
Brown to the sapphire heights upsprings the lark.

Deep in the valley is an amber gleam,
Brown gold the river goes and flecked with foam,
Makes a small music now, faint as in dream,
And it going to the sea as a child runs home.

Over the dim blue hills a wild fire shows
Honey of the gorse now and shaken gold,
Lambs calling to the sheep and the sheep knows
The call of her tender one a few hours old.

Now in the shadowy hour the slight trees wear
Amber and the russet, and all the browns,
Veils of the purple on the hidden hair,
And they walking two and two, queens by their gowns.

THE TREE'S DOUBLE

How beautiful the tree shadows lie on
  The paler green o' the grasses!
  October wind stirs them a little and passes,
Cloud-shadows sail above them and are gone.

The trees are like a golden fountain's spray,
  Like golden waters raining.
  When the October skies and ways are waning,
The trees alone have the heart to be gay.

Yet there's a blue sky, and the sun is gold,
  A gold tree and a bird in it,
  A Jenny Wren or a belated linnet,
Singing away though all the nests are cold.

The tree upon the grass has a bird's shadow,
  As the live tree its bird,
  Shadow and substance joyfully praise the Lord
As well as when the world was all a meadow.

And when the living tree rocks at its pleasure
  Its bird in frolic glee,
  The shadow-bird within the shadow-tree,
Dances upon the grass to the same measure.

THE OAK AND THE MAN

The oak said to the forest trees:
We are nigh as old as the eagle is,
As old as the carp that takes his ease
In the pond under the terraces.

Beech and lime, it is long in truth
Since I was an acorn round and smooth.
God knows, and yet I am still a youth:
I shall live a thousand years in sooth.

Brothers, he said, lean down by me.
See, a man walketh, so small to see!
His head is not as high as my knee,
But his pride soars high as the highest tree.

He who must die! His day is brief.
He swings on the bough like a painted leaf
That the wind of Autumn layeth in grief.
Friends, of us, trees, he is Lord and Chief!

He is but a babe and yet he is old.
A word, a song, and his tale is told.
He would soar to the sun but his heart grows
cold,
His pride has neither stay nor hold.

Brothers, many men have we seen
By the lawns and the pond and the bowling-green
Of the ancient house that's wise and serene,
Nigh as old as myself, I ween.

We see man tottering, daisy-high.
A breath he loves, he is high as the sky.
He sees his children and he must die;
Brief as the moth and the butterfly.

Hear, ash and elm! He laughed in his beard.
The laughing forest rocked as it heard—
We are *his*, we whom the ages reared,
Whom storm nor lightning could make afeard!

See his pride. He is weak and slight,
Yet straddles earth like a god in his might.
We are *his*. We have seen the ages' flight
And this world's glory fade in a night!

The oak shook through his mighty girth.
Leagues of forest rocked to his mirth.
The man like a twig that has fallen to earth
Said: In my woods the wind stirreth.

IN THE GREEN WOOD

In the green wood, by a green slope,
The nightingale was tuning up
Before his full orchestrals broke:
And it was golden three o'clock:
Three of the green May afternoon,
As it were white of the full moon.

Out of the green by threes and twos
Came little folk in soundless shoes,
Quiet and shy and hand in hand,
Glad little folks from Elfin land.
The blue cap of a hyacinth bell,
Their pale hair might adorn it well.

Now hear the nightingale his trill!
O darling thrush, for once be still!
Linnet and finch, forget to sing,
For now's the magical hour and thing
When on the wings of a song are flown
Mortals to the Immortal One.

O blackbird, shout no more, for all
The listening world is taken in thrall.

Listen to the Immortal strain
For all that rapture, all that pain,
That toss the heart high as the lark
To the starred Heaven and the blue
dark.

In the green wood my eyes were wet,
My heart goes crying and soaring yet.

WINTER TREES

Across the sky, across the snow,
The sober rooks are winging slow,
Grey roses in the rush-fringed pool,
And Winter trees are beautiful.

The West is now a garden-close,
Pink roses and a golden rose,
With amber and with tender green,
To let the throbbing stars between.

Against that world of roses stand—
These are the woods of Fairyland—
Poplar and oak and elm to make
A gold brake and a rosy brake.

Instead of silky leaves of Spring
The stars now make their garnishing;
For May roses and April white
The snow has lit them all the night.

The red sun hangs his lantern red
Between the black boughs overhead,
The evening clothes them with his mist
Half sapphire and half amethyst.

The dawn roses are scattered here
As 'twere a rose espalier
Whose happy boughs have borne for fruit
Red roses all from head to foot.

Even the lamp that men have set
To light the way for travelling feet
Caught in the dark tree glitters bright
As chrysoprase and chrysolite.

Down the long road's perspective go
The dark trees in a double row,
Spangled with lamplight, gold and cool;
And Winter trees are beautiful.

IN MAY

I PRAISE God that He chose the green
To wrap our dear brown mother in,
And not the purple or the rose
Nor other hue the rainbow shows.

To-day when chestnut fans half-spread
Feed the starved soul with daily bread,
When poplars like green tapers soar,
To say their Sursum Cordas o'er,

To-day with thorn-trees white as milk,
And fields all clad in grass-green silk,
Damasked with daisies wonderfully,
And every tree a heavenly tree,

What other colour, blue or white,
Could so refresh us, so delight?
Yellows or violets so brim o'er
Our cup of sweets to hold no more?

Year after year when May comes sweet,
Hidden in green from head to feet,
Under pale arches, dropping still
Lapfuls of flowers in vale and hill;

A wonder, a green miracle,
More fairy-fine than words can tell:
I praise God that He chose the green
To wrap our sweetheart-mother in.

THE GREEN LADY

Grey Spring twilight, the mild light, the shy light,
Larks, finches, linnets, all wild with glee.
The blackbird's shouting, without fear or doubting:
Nothing's dead and nothing's lost: Look up and see!

Thrushes are spilling their gold rain, filling
The yet bare arches of the wood with wild delight.
But who is this Lady bids the world make ready
For love-feasts and lovers and the scented night?

Oh, who is this Lady? By covert shady,
By orchard and garden her foot will steal:
A sweet, sweet shadow, by hill and meadow,
Tells her tale to the hid vale, the listening hill.

She comes all unbidden, with wild eyes hidden;
Veils of mist cover her with a green dress.

Where her foot passes, the dead under the grasses
Ask: Is it time? And she answers: Yes.

I have not seen her, but the grass is greener
For the white feet of her that glide and float.
I but divine her by a something finer,
Wilder and gayer in the blackbird's note.

She's a heavenly presence by park and pleasance,
In the grey twilight a presence dear.
Half apprehended, by the choir attended,
Her gown of the green silk laps at my ear.

To my highest chamber her white feet clamber.
Oh, the Spring, the Spring's in my house and joys I lost.
In the grey twilight, the soft light, the shy light,
Comes and goes like a mist of green, a gentle ghost.

THE TREE

Think of her when she shall be dead
As of a kindly tree
Within whose boughs some nests were made
For downy babes to be.

Through sun and shade on the greensward
Her songs went up in praise
Who mused upon the forest's Lord
Through all her length of days.

No king of woodland she, but just
A small tree, low and wide,
By which some faint from heat and dust
Sat down well satisfied.

Say that she had a well to keep
Where all might drink their fill,
Say that she comforted with sleep
The sorefoot traveller still.

Say that the creatures came to graze,
And lay in pastures cool
Beside the pleasant waterways,
And her content was full.

Say that her pleasant maze of shade
  Soothèd the aching eyes
Like dew upon the heavy head
  Under the throbbing skies.

Say that her birds were never far
  But they came home again
And in her branches singing were
  Despite the snow and rain.

Say that in Spring her boughs were green,
  The joy ran in her blood,
That Summer clad her like a Queen
  Under a velvet hood.

But say that when her Autumn came
  Her best was yet to be:
She clad herself in gold and flame
  Like to a Burning Tree.

Say that she feared no Winter white
  In whose thin boughs did swing
The moon, the stars, for a lantern bright
  To light the feet of Spring.

Say that her head was never bowed
  Though trouble might befall;
The bird in her heart sang low and loud
  And made amends for all.

Say that in fine, her spring beside,
She was merry and gave grace,
And some were sorry when she died
Who lost a resting-place.

AUTUMNAL

I WISH the poplar tree would shed
The leafage it has borne so long,
That the last word was done and said
With the last blackbird's summer song.
If once the boughs were bare and stark
Who knows what hopes might stir in the dark?

The yellow trees the South wind blows,
I wish they would shed their last gold rain.
If they were stripped at last who knows
What heavy heart might lift again?
One must be stripped quite bare before
Comes the new birth long waited for.

Better sweet things when done and over
Were out of sight beneath a stone.
If one were stripped beyond recover
Who knows what stir of buds unblown,
What sap, might warm the chill veins
After the Winter and the rains?

Some day the purple buds might come,
Thickening the branch against the sky,

What time the blackbird sings in the gloom
And a wet wind goes wandering by,
With violets in its breath. Who knows
What joy might be with lily and rose?

The ghost of Summer troubles me.
If skies were grey and winds were chill,
Who knows what sudden hope might be
Of wonderful new beginnings still?
When one might find at last—one might!—
Again, the long-perished dear delight.

CHESTNUT IN MAY

Chestnut builds the loveliest house, the loveliest house for lovers,
When May brings the swallow home and all the feathered rovers,
Spreads the feast and makes the bed for finches, tits, and plovers,
All in a glory of pale green amid the scented clovers.

Hark the lark, hark the thrush, and see the skimming swallow!
May's the priest in every bush, with honeymoons to follow.
Hear the bridegroom shout "I will" o'er many a hill and hollow,
While the brides lie coy and still in leafage deep or shallow.

Cuckoo calls like John-a-Dreams, like John-a-Dreams still roaming:
Nightingales from dark to day awake the scented gloaming;

Orchards stand in rose and white amid the lilacs blooming;
Brown is on the golden grass and the new hay is coming.

Chestnut lifts the loveliest roof of waving plume and feather;
All within is emerald green and steeped in golden weather,
Dim and soft the little rooms of wool and moss and heather,
When love leads the lovers home and shuts them in together.

Hear, oh, hear, the blackbirds sing, the linnets and the thrushes!
All the dear delights of Spring in liquid trills and gushes;
All the dear delights of Love with pauses and with hushes,
Eden is in every tree, and Heaven in all the bushes.

Chestnut builds the loveliest house, for Love's delight and bedding;
Silken soft the floor and walls and wild the roof-tree spreading;
Lights the candles up for Love, a pearly lustre shedding.
Chestnut builds the loveliest house for wooing and for wedding.

LEAVES

Myriads and myriads plumed their glistening wings,
As fine as any bird that soars and sings,
As bright as fireflies or the dragon-flies,
Or birds of paradise.

Myriads and myriads waved their sheeny fans,
Soft as the dove's breast, or the pelican's;
And some were gold, and some were green, and some
Pink-lipped, like the apple-bloom.

A low wind tossed the plumage all one way,
Rippled with gold feathers, and green and grey—
A low wind that in moving sang one song
All day and all night long.

Sweet honey in the leafage, and cool dew,
A roof of stars, a tent of gold and blue;
Silence and sound at once, and dim green light,
To turn the gold day night.

Some trees hung lanterns out, and some had
stars,
Silver as Hesper, and rose-red as Mars;
A low wind flung the lanterns low and high,
A low wind like a sigh.

Myriads and myriads, more in number than
The sea's sands, or its drops of water wan,
Sang one name in the rapture that is May,
With faces turned one way.

CHRISTMAS TREES

The white trees for Christmas
They light the short day,
Pear-bloom and cherry-bloom,
White lilac and May,
In lace and frozen silver,
As fair as brides be,
And white bloom at Christmas
Makes many a Christmas Tree.

And what shall hang the branches
Of trees white as snow?
Strings of pearls and crystals
And diamonds arow.
And He will laugh to see them,
The Babe of little price,
Whose toys are moons and planets
On Trees of Paradise.

Here let us hang to please Him
The Gifts the Kings bring:
The nard, the gold, the silver,
And for a Baby Thing,

The gifts of simple Shepherds,
A ball, a pipe to blow,
The pretty sheep and oxen,
The stable in the snow.

Light up with lamps all burning
Cold branches above
The hearts of men adoring
That are consumed with love!
The hair of Mother Mary
To weave a gold nest:
The wings of small angels
And the Stars for the rest.

PERSONALIA

THE IMAGE

When a wild grace I see,
A turn o' the neck, a curl, sweet hands, clear eyes,
Gentleness, courtesy, dignity;
In all these gifts Thee I surmise, surprise.

All beauty and delight:
Skin like a rose, a beauteous shape, an air
Free and enchanting, give my weary sight
Glimpses of Thee, Thou Beauty past compare.

Strength, courage also are Thine,
And joy of youth and wings that cleave the blue,
Low singing and soft voices: I divine
In these Thy beauty ancient yet ever new.

O, when my startled eye
Perceives this beauty league-long, sea and isle
And eagle-crested mountains wild and high,
I catch Thy Maker's thought—I see Thy smile.

Some mirror out of range
Flashes reflex of Heaven on this sweet earth,
Brooding for ever, beautiful, without change,
The bluebell sea, the thousand streams' soft mirth.

All beauty is of Thee:
Kindness and quietness, moon and stars and sun,
Gardens and woods, the bird in the new-fledged tree,
And sleep, O Kindest One!

SANCTUARIES

Thou givest me greenest sanctuaries,
As birds have the trees.
The birds have the trees and I
Deep shadow and blue sky,
A well of waters, a palm tree,
A bird and a bee.

As though I were Thine only one
Thou makest for me alone
A hearth-fire in the wintry cold,
A walled city, a sweet fold,
A winged sentinel to tell
To the night: All's well!

Thou spreadest over me and mine
The night a-shine
With strange and wonderful eyes of stars;
And weary of the day's wars
Into the nest of love we creep
And lie asleep.

Hearts are Thy sanctuaries: Thou hast set
Wide open a heart's gate

Where I come in and am at rest,
A bed for my heart, a nest,
Sure comfort, surplusage of love.
Thou givest enough!

Woods are Thy sanctuaries and all
Dear gardens musical,
And fields and groves where it may be
Thine angel walks with me.
Thine angel! Nay, but Thou dost walk
With me and talk.

THE PURBLIND PRAISES THE LORD

They cannot know, the keen of sight,
The lovely things I see.
I praise the Lord both day and night
That He remembers me.

I see the tree in its new leaf,
A burning bush of green;
Green beyond wonder and belief
Its soft and silken sheen.

I cannot see the birds in boughs,
But an enchanted choir
Sings all day long in a hid house
Of emerald, flame and fire.

I cannot tell where hills leave off
And where the clouds begin:
Such mountains, Alp on Alp, above,
No eye hath ever seen.

Pink blossom on the apple-branch
For me's a rosy bower—
The cherry tree an avalanche
Of snow-white flower on flower.

My distant candle's misted round
With gold and glittering air,
An angel with a glory crowned
Upon the heavenly stair.

I miss the common and the dull,
The small details of things,
And only keep the beautiful,
The stars, the flowers, the wings.

I see the faces that are dear,
The others they may pass.
I thank my God I see not clear,
But dim, as in a glass.

Yea, though the world should slip from sight,
And I no more should see,
I'll praise my God both day and night
That He remembers me.

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

The life of the body's a cage,
  And the soul within it
Frets to escape, to be free,
  Like a lark or a linnet.
But since the struggle's in vain,
  She is weary ere long;
She chirps and she sings a little
  To assuage her wrong.

Behind the bars she sits brooding
  Her evil mishap,
Like a wild little hare or a rabbit
  That's caught in a trap,
Till, dazed with despair, she is weary,
  And struggles no more,
But plays with the sun and leaf-shadow
  That dance on the floor.

They call—they call to each other:
  O sister so small,
Are you there? Are you there, little brother,
  Behind the blank wall?
Like a bird, or a hare, or a rabbit,
  Frightened, undone,
The soul calls to another,
  That she be not alone.

APRIL

A BLACK North Wind that chills
  New leaves and songs scarce sung;
It was not so in Aprils
  When I was young.

Thrush-notes and blackbird-trill
  The blossomy boughs among;
All in the leafy Aprils
  When I was young.

Showers on the heavenly hills
  Rainbow and silver hung;
Such tears and smiles were April's
  When I was young.

Small streams and babbling rills,
  Green ways where gossamers swung;
The young lambs leaped in Aprils
  When I was young.

Daisies and daffodils,
  Primroses newly sprung;
Fragrant and fresh the Aprils
  When I was young.

Here in this town that kills,
The heart for cold is wrung.
It's O for the happy Aprils
When I was young!

VITA NUOVA

Now is the time once more,
Dear and desired of old,
Spring at the sill, at the door,
Slender and young and cold.
Scarcely the heart can hold
The joy long waited for.
Now the magical word is told,
And the young Spring's at the door.

When all the folk are asleep,
Save only the feathered folk,
She goes by the hills of sheep,
By the lambs and the grazing flock,
Flowers in the fold of her cloak,
And the grey dawn at the peep,
The trumpeter Daffodil woke
The thrush and blackbird asleep.

Now in the East and the dark
The heart trembles and sings,
Sings with the linnet and lark
New songs of immortal things.
It wakes, it quivers, it springs,
O heart, that was Winter stark,
It lifts with a beat of wings,
When the Spring calls in the dark.

FAREWELL

Not soon shall I forget: a sheet
Of golden water, cold and sweet,
The young moon with her head in veils
Of silver, and the nightingales.

A wain of hay came up the lane—
O fields I shall not walk again,
And trees I shall not see, so still
Against a sky of daffodil!

Fields where my happy heart had rest,
And where my heart was heaviest,
I shall remember them at peace
Drenched in moon-silver like a fleece.

The golden water sweet and cold,
The moon half-silver and half-gold,
The dew upon the grey grass-spears:
I shall remember them with tears.

AN ABIDING CITY

My city walls are builded sure
Whatever foes assail;
I go my ways in peace secure
As I were clad in mail.

The Hand that holds me keeps me well,
'Twixt earth and Heaven I rest.
Within that Hand in joy I dwell,
Without am sore distrest.

Free from all cares this Hand doth hold
Poor folk that creep within.
Darkness and grief are turned to gold,
There's naught of soil or sin.

When dawn comes redly up like wine
It shines through Fingers five;
The Precious Blood was shed long-syne
To keep my soul alive.

Safe in that Hand, nothing I dread,
No foe shall make me fear,
I who have roses for my bed
Soft as a bosom dear.

My city walls are builded strong,
  My sentries go in white,
The years long and the seasons long
  Pass in a dream of light.

MAYO

There's a wide sea flowing and a deep river going
Betwixt you and me, Mayo,
And there's no bridge over, and past all recover
Are the days of long ago.

But O it's dear you are, and O it's fair you are!
As I go to and fro
I see the great skies of you; the fall and rise of you
Are like my heart, Mayo!

Your great skies arching and your mountains marching,
Like Kings to the sea they go;
Croagh Patrick and Nephin have scarce their like in Heaven.
O the grandeur of your mountains, Mayo!

The wind from the ocean comes with a wild commotion
Over bogs I used to know;

Rose and bronze and azure, like a great
King's treasure,
The colours of your bogs, Mayo.

Was I ever fretful, of your beauty forgetful,
Were the days ever sad and slow,
When he and I, together, walked in the wild
weather
Your roads and your fields, Mayo?

There's a blue sea by Achill and a long
heather hill;
My heart keeps sighing soft and low;
But we'll never come again in the sun or in
the rain
Over your shining plains, Mayo.

THE FIRST SINGING

When I shall come one evening to God's
house on the hill,
I ask no singing angels by lintel or window-
sill,
Nor any harp or cithern, but only the wild
song
The thrush and the blackbird sang when I
was young.

Give me no fadeless Summer and no un-
withering wreath,
But the year in its seasons and new life after
death,
And in the heart of Winter the joys yet to be,
And the blackbird singing on a rime-pale tree.

O Paradise skies, be cloudy sometimes lest
I should pine
For the soft mists and raining in that wild
land of mine,
And the blackbird singing bravely amid the
dripping boughs,
And the thrush with his talking of a love-lit
house.

I should miss, 'mid the tuning of the high
heavenly choir,
The song of the blackbird telling my heart's
desire,
Amid the joy and glory and the old world
made new,
The thirst for the blackbird would break my
heart in two.

I think where I'll be going the Lord will not
forget
The joy He gave His people; sure He'll
remember yet!
He'll keep a cloud, a raining upon the blue
and gold,
And the thrush and the blackbird their song
in the cold.

THE QUIET NIGHTS

Unmindful of my low desert,
Who turn e'en blessings to my hurt,
God sends me graces o'er and o'er,
More than the sands on the seashore.

Among the blessings He doth give
My starveling soul that she may live,
I praise Him for my nights He kept
And all the quiet sleep I slept,

Since I was young, who now grow old;
For all those nights of heat, of cold,
I slept the sweet hours through, nor heard
Even the call of the first bird.

Nights when the darkness covered me
In a great peace like a great sea,
With waves of sweetness, who should lie
Wakeful for mine iniquity.

Cool nights of fragrance, dripping sweet,
After the sultriness of heat,
Amid grey meadows drenched with dew;
Sweet was the sleep my eyelids knew.

Surely some angel kept my bed
After I had knelt down and prayed.
Like a young child I slept, until
The day stood at the window-sill.

I thank Him for the nights of stars,
Bright Saturn with his rings, and Mars,
And overhead the Milky Way,
Nights when the summer lightnings play.

How many a Milky Way I trod,
And through the mercy of my God
Drank milk and honey, wrapped in ease
Of darkness and sweet heaviness!

I thank Him for the wakening bird,
And the struck hours I have not heard,
And for the morns so cool, so kind,
That found me fresh in heart and mind.

Among the gifts of His mercy,
More than the leaves upon the tree,
The sands upon the shore, I keep
And name my lovely nights of sleep.

AN ANTHEM IN HEAT

Now praise the Lord, both moon and sun,
And praise Him, all ye nights and days,
And golden harvests everyone,
And all ye hidden waterways,
With cattle standing to the knees
Safe from the bitter gadfly's sting;
But praise Him most, O little breeze
That walks abroad at evening.

Oh, praise Him, all ye orchards now,
And all ye gardens deep in green,
Ripe apples on the yellowing bough,
And golden plum and nectarine,
And peaches ruddier than the rose,
And pears against the southern wall;
But most the little wind that blows,
The blessed wind at evenfall.

Oh, praise Him, hoary dews again,
Drenching the meadows 'neath the moon,
And praise Him, hidden founts of rain,
And amber brooks singing a tune,
And icy deeps of well-water,
And each pellucid stream and spring;
But praise Him most, O wind astir,
O blessed wind at evening.

Oh, praise Him now, ye burning days
  Of golden summer, hot and spent;
Planets and stars, see that His praise
  Be blown about the firmament.
Yet praise Him best, O little wind
  That out of heaven will blow and call,
Because, because our God is kind
  And bids us live at evenfall.

THE GOD ON THE HEARTH

A GOD, a god sits on my hearth,
Laughs and plays with sober mirth,
Sings a small song, merry and wild,
As a bird might or a child.

As a kitten plays will play,
Or a lamb on a May day.
A happy, busy household elf
Croons a wee song to himself.

Strayed here from some Olympian hill,
This god in rose and daffodil
Yet boils my kettle, cooks my dish,
Gives savour to the meats and fish.

I stretch my chilly hands above
And like my dog he fawns in love:
Licks at me with a playful tongue
And frisks, a bright thing, merry and young.

And yet so great a god is he,
You shall approach him on your knee,
Lest that his lightnings teach you awe,
This Burning Bush that Moses saw.

He is the Ark no hand may touch,
The Lily of Light without a smutch,
The Living Rose that none may take,
Caged in a gold and thorny brake.

This holy one stays with me still,
Singing his small song merry and shrill,
And hath so many things to do,
There is no time to grieve or rue

For the great state he hath forgone,
The Lord Sun's dear companion,
Who toils and plays upon my hearth,
Nor yet forgets his starry birth.

EIGHTY YEARS OLD

The world is left behind him quite,
  His soul hath journeyed many a mile
Already on her heavenly flight;
  Though here he tarries yet awhile.

The tired old body's with us yet:
  The spirit has gone free and pressed
Beyond life's long fatigue and fret
  To where is quietness and rest.

He looks at us and sees us not,
  Or sees us dimly: his tired eyes,
Innocent, without fleck or spot,
  Wear the child's colour and the sky's.

He has regained his innocence,
  Is newly-washed and white and sweet,
Clean from the stains of sin and sense,
  Like a dear child from head to feet.

Only his heart's love answers ours.
  The old heart tarries with us still,
Puts out green shoots of love, fresh flowers,
  That age nor Death himself can kill.

A child, a child in the dark awhile
Whom the dark frightens till he turns
Glad to his mother-daughter's smile
And her kind heart for which he yearns.

Across what infinite distances
He looks at us? across what sea?
Only our hearts have touch with his,
Else we had lost him utterly.

FOR YOUR SAKE

For your sake who have left me grieving
I love the old who are tired of living,
Tired of travelling a road grown weary,
More than the young, more than the merry.

The old, patient and rosy faces
Stir my heart in its secret places.
The old eyes that ache for rest
Set my heart to bleed in my breast.

More than the children, golden and ruddy,
The bent knees and the feeble body
Stab my heart with the mother-pain,
For your sake in the night and rain.

For your sake I would fain enfold them,
The old heads to my breast and hold them,
Keep them safe from the lonely fear,
My kind love of many a year.

The old hands, I could kneel and kiss them,
Knotted and purple, could love them, caress
them.
Ah, my dear, when the house is asleep,
I see your hands and I wake and weep.

THE LAST TIME

This is the last time we shall sit and see
The dreaming hills so dear to you and me;
The last time that this mountain wind so cool
Shall lave us in its freshness beautiful.

The last time we shall go in the dim dusk,
Down the steep golf-links, sweet with honey and musk
Of the evening fragrance; and the last sad time
We'll hear across these fields the vesper chime.

We shall not hear again the wood-doves all
Crooning, when shades of night begin to fall,
Nor smell again yon pines that fill the night
And day with their spilt odours of delight.

We shall not sleep and wake so fresh, so gay,
Under our cottage eaves to the bright day,
Nor see across the lawn the exquisite trees
Flinging long shadows over the pale leas.

Our life is full of last times: yet we go
With a high heart of courage, since we know
We go together, we and our small brood,
Dear imps of mischief, quaint and wild and good.

With a high heart of courage we can face,
Hand fast in hand, all change of time and place,
The dark fogs and the winter and the streets,
We have our secret greenness, our retreats.

Yet in all last times there is hid a grief,
A canker in the flower and in the leaf,
Over them lies a shadow not their own,
From some most bitter day, my dear, my own.

When for the last time I shall walk with you—
Even old friends must part though dear and true—
We who were always glad, being side by side,
Shall reach that point at last where ways divide.

And for the sake of the last talk, last walk,
To-night the flower goes withering on its stalk,
There's desolation on the hills and sea
Because of the last time that's yet to be.

THANKSGIVING

I THANK God when I kneel to pray
That mine is still the middle way,

Set in a safe and sweet estate
Between the little and the great;

Not troubled with wealth's cares nor yet
Too poor, where needs that cark and fret

Push out sweet leisure and green nooks,
And give no chance for talk and books.

I take my middle way between
The mansion and a lodging mean.

My cottage at the country's edge
Hath sweetbriar growing in its hedge,

Honesty, heartsease, and sweet-peas,
Herb-Benet, love-in-idleness.

Give me a tree, a well, a hive,
And I can save my soul alive

Yet be as poor in spirit as
The Poverello's Lady was.

I covet not soft silk or lace
Nor any lovely lady's face;

Nor yet would go in hodden grey;
But lawns and wool be my array.

I still may ask a friend to dine
And set him meat and pour him wine;

Nor count the coins within my purse
To see that I am nothing worse.

I thank God that my middle place
Is set amid such pleasantness,

And not too high and not too low
The safe, untroubled path I go.

THE FIRST THRUSH

The thrush begins again,
In the stripped and listening tree,
The old immortal strain,
Rapture and ecstasy.

Ah, when we were together,
Love, how we thrilled to hear
The voice of the Spring weather,
The wild hope, the wild cheer!

The heart that used to spring
To some strange joy before
Lies now a wingless thing,
Not to be cheated more.

Dear, by what groves you fare,
What waters of Paradise,
What glory of ambient air
Floods your amazèd eyes:

Oh, when your first birds call
Clear from the heavenly hill,
You will remember all
The wild hope, the wild thrill.

Love, you will know full well
What yet I do not know,
That the thrush tried to tell
In earth's fields long ago.

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A DAY-DREAMER

Since coming from the land of dreams is lonely,
And the world's daylight very cold and grey,
I will return beyond the sun's rim only
Into the gold dusk of my yesterday.

I will return through yonder purple coppice,—
But O, thou love-worn nightingale, be still!—
Into a world of silken, scarlet poppies,
Wherein who loveth dreams shall have his fill.

THE OLD LAND

When I came back to Ireland the leaves on
the tree,
The birds on the branches would keep re-
minding me,
With, *don't you remember?* and *could you*
forget?
Till I'm living and walking in the old times
yet.

The wind from the mountains it blows fresh
and strong;
Ah, don't you remember? is still the wind's
song.
With *don't you remember?* and *could you forget?*
As I went out walking 'twas the dead that
I met.

There's a road runs to Wicklow: it goes past
the door.
The dust of it's holy for feet it once bore.
They've all travelled Westward where the
sun doesn't set,
Ah, don't you remember? and *could you forget?*

The blackbird he's mocking from the apple-
bough:
Sure, why would you trouble to be coming now
When them that sore missed you are past fear
and fret?
Ah, don't you remember? and *could you forget?*

There's not a flower in Ireland, there isn't a
hill,
Nor yet a breath of the Four Winds but
keeps reminding still,
Till my poor heart is troubled and my eyes
are wet
For *don't you remember?* and *could you forget?*

THE LITTLE HOUSE

I WILL have a little house
  When the children are flown.
The feel of a big house
  Would be cold as a stone;
A house full of emptiness
  And we two alone.

But in a little house
  We could creep to the blaze;
We could warm our cold hearts
  With the thought of old days;
Him and me together
  When the firelight plays.

There would be hardly room
  For the ghosts to come in;
Ghosts of the little children
  Who made a merry din,
Long ago and long ago
  When I was a queen.

I will have a little garden
  Big enough for two,

Where we can walk together
When the skies are blue,
Talking the good days over
And how fast they flew.

The littlest house and garden
For him and me just,
And all the sweet times we had
Withered to dust.
A big house would break my heart
For the children lost.

THE TWO VOICES

The night darkens fast and the shadows darken;
Clouds and the rain gather about mine house.
Only the wood-dove moans—hearken, oh, hearken!
The moan of the wood-dove in the rain-wet boughs.

Loneliness and the night! Night is not lonely;
Star-crowned the night takes to a tender breast,
Wrapping them in her veil these dark hours only,
The weary, the bereaved, the dispossessed.

When will it lighten? Once the night was kindly,
Nor all her hours went by leaden and long.
Now in mine house the hours go groping blindly
After the shiver of dawn, the first bird's song.

Sleep now! Be still! The night with wings of splendour
Hides heavy eyes from light that they may sleep,
Soft and secure under her gaze so tender,
Lest they should wake to weep, should wake to weep.

THE END

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